THE CISTERCIANS IN YORKSHIRE

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THE CISTERCIANS IN YORKSHIRE

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THE CISTERCIANS IN YORKSHIRE

BY

J. S. FLETCHER

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PREFACE

I HAVE no intention of disarming criticism when I say that in the following pages there is no offering either of scholarship or of the results of original research. What is here attempted is to give a plain account, for the benefit of the average reader, of the rise of the Cistercian Order, and of its establishment in Yorkshire; of the fortunes of the eight Yorkshire houses in poverty and in power; of the causes and events which led to their suppression; and of their actual fate in 1535–1540. I have relied throughout on the authorities referred to in an appended list: all are readily available to those who desire a more intimate and detailed acquaintance with the subject.

J. S. FLETCHER

HAMBROOK, CHICHESTER.
May 1919

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THE CISTERCIANS IN YORKSHIRE

CHAPTER I

THE CISTERCIAN ORDER

1. Early Monasticism.

Whoever would seek for the germs of the austerity and devotion which marked the early and middle periods of Cistercian history must go far back—as far, at least, as those early years of the sixth century in which Benedict of Nursia founded his first monastic communities in the neighbourhood of Subiaco in Italy. Perhaps he should go even further back, for the monasticism of the West, to which Benedict gave order and system, was but a development of the monasticism of the East. Early in the fourth century St. Anthony's example was followed by many Christians of Egypt, and *laurai* were established. These were communities in which each member had his own separate cell, and only met his brethren at the common services. A development came, a little later, when St. Pachomius founded his first *cœnobium*, further south in the same country; in this, the meetings of the monks for worship and meals were frequent and regular, and the principle of common labour was introduced. But a much more important development was that of St. Basil, who about the year 360 established near Neocæsarea a true system of common life, lived under one roof, under a communal father, the abbot. The new principle spread westward: before the time of Benedict, houses, founded on the idea of St. Basil, were established wherever Christianity had either super-

seded or was slowly driving out the pagan cults. From one such house, at Lerins, one of the small islands which lie in the northern stretch of the Mediterranean, off the south coast of France, monasticism spread to Ireland through the agency of St. Patrick, whose wanderings had led him to that house for instruction and training; it spread from Ireland, in one direction to France and Italy, in another to the loneliness of Iona, whence St. Columba and his followers introduced it into the northern parts of Britain. To these first practisers of religious life lived apart Western Europe owes its first knowledge of the principles of Christianity.

2. St. Benedict.

But it is to St. Benedict that Western monasticism owes rule, order, system, and, above everything, a new sense of the monastic ideal. The Eastern idea, as practised by the followers of St. Anthony, had been one of individual devotion: the idea of St. Benedict was that of religion in brotherhood. The monk of the East, in his separate cell, had imposed upon himself his own rule and his own austerities: St. Benedict taught the monks of the West the value and advantages of the common life. The followers of St. Anthony vied with each other in the heroism of individual self-denial: St. Benedict showed the better way of common emulation in piety based on obedience and humility: his followers were to pray, but they were also to work; to deny themselves, but also to help others; all was to be done in common endeavour. At some period of his own abbacy of Monte Cassino, over which house he ruled for thirty years, he wrote his Rule, which, because of its very wisdom and reasonableness, speedily became the established code of monasticism in Western Europe. Introduced into England by St. Augustine, himself a Benedictine monk, it gradually spread over the country, and influenced, if it did not wholly supersede, the forms of Celtic monasticism which existed at Glastonbury and

Monkwearmouth, at Ripon and Whitby. Extinguished, in common with all Christian institutions in this country, by the pagan invasions in the eighth century, it was revived by the genius of St. Dunstan, and came to its full flower in the period which saw the building of Evesham and Worcester, Ramsey and Westminster. The upheaval which immediately preceded and followed the events of the Norman Conquest gave the spread of the Benedictine rule some slight check, but the new masters were good churchmen and generous benefactors, and the high-placed ecclesiastics who followed William from Normandy were adepts in the science of organization. By the end of the eleventh century the Order was more powerful and popular in England than at any time since the arrival of St. Augustine, and in the whole of Western Europe it was exerting an influence and numbering adherents in degrees which its founder could scarcely have foreseen. The cell of the Italian hermit of Subiaco had developed into a vast system; his first few followers into an army of men as famous for their learning as he had been for his piety.

3. Laxity and Indifference.

But other changes had come. The Order had begun in poverty: it was by this time exceeding rich. It had been cradled in obscurity, unnoticed of men; it was now celebrated, and its foremost officials sat in proud seats; moreover, it was highly popular. And with wealth and power and popularity had come the inevitable accompaniments of laxity and indifference. Some notion of the laxity which existed may be gathered from what we know of the state of things at Canterbury, when Lanfranc, as Archbishop, sought to reform the community of Christchurch. The monks went hunting and hawking—they found an indoor amusement in casting dice. From such laxity as this indifference would naturally follow. Yet the rule of St. Benedict was neither unduly severe nor tending to gloom, as Lanfranc pointed

out. It was the old, frequently repeated case of the churchman's three curses—wealth, power, love of ease: three things, concomitants of worldliness, had broken in upon the original good system. But however widely the laxity had spread, there were always those who longed in the midst of it for revival and reform—wise men, who knew that the true conservatism is that which, in preserving what is good in the old, hesitates not to eliminate whatever badness has grown, parasite-like, upon it; who knew, too, that reform, true and genuine, is as much an evidence of life as growth itself. Such reformers grew up within the Benedictine Order early in the tenth century: beginning with no more than a desire to keep the original rule in its first purity and strictness, circumstance and necessity forced them into founding what became, virtually, new Orders under other names.

4. The Cluniacs.

Of these new Orders, the first in point of date was the Cluniac, taking its name from the abbey of Cluny, founded in 910, of which St. Berno was first abbot. While it preserved much of the original rule, the Cluniac Order differed from the Benedictine in matters of administration. Every Benedictine abbot was master in his own house; the heads of the Cluniac houses were priors, under the rule of the Abbot of Cluny, general supervisor of the whole Order. The houses were exempt from episcopal authority: the head of the Order was responsible only to Rome. Here was a radical difference between the Benedictine and Cluniac Orders—to the Cluniacs it proved a fatal weakness, for when Cluny itself declined, the daughter houses declined with it. Many houses had been established in England—two, Pontefract and Monk Bretton, in Yorkshire. They were all liable to seizure by the Crown, being alien houses, and they eventually suffered confiscation. Certain of them, however, were permitted to remain as "denizen"

houses, English priors being placed in charge of them; one, at any rate, was transformed into an abbey—St. Saviour at Bermondsey. As time went on, these Cluniac houses, founded in the desire for more strictness, declined from the same causes that had brought about the Benedictine laxity—the acquisition of wealth and power.

5. The Carthusians.

Further reform of the original Benedictine rule came in 1084, when St. Bruno took a number of followers to the solitude of La Chartreuse. He and his fellow-Carthusians at once adopted a system of great severity. They went back to the Eastern method of comparative isolation. Each member of the community had his separate cell—in reality, a small house arranged on a specially devised plan—in which he said his prayers, performed his labour, took his meal, made his meditations. The rule of silence was strict. The brethren only met in church. The churches were plain of architecture, without ornament; there was nothing of precious metal in them save one silver chalice in each, with one silver tube through which the sacramental element was administered. The brethren wore the coarsest of garments; goat's skin next their own; they had no meat at any time; one day out of the seven they had nothing but bread, salt, and water. A high festival must have been to them a great occasion; then they were allowed a certain amount of fish and cheese, and a little wine mixed with water; the rule of silence was somewhat relaxed. In England there were, at the most, never more than ten or eleven Carthusian houses: the best example of their plan and structure remaining to us may be seen in the ruins of Mount Grace Priory, on the slopes of the Hambledon Hills in Yorkshire.

6. The Cistercians.

But greatest, most famous, and eventually most powerful of all the reformed Benedictine Orders was that which originated at Citeaux, in the diocese of Chalon-sur-Saône, in Burgundy. The Cistercian Order, once established, spread with wonderful rapidity. At the end of the eleventh century it had one house—the parent house; by 1128 it possessed thirty; by 1152, three hundred and thirty; a hundred years later, it counted at least six hundred. It had fifty houses in England and Wales within fifty years of the founding of Citeaux; the fifty were to increase before long to seventy-five. In Yorkshire, by the middle of the twelfth century, eight houses had been founded; they were foremost in England for their size, their influence, and their eventual wealth and importance: some of them, daughters themselves of Citeaux or of Clairvaux, became mother-houses of scarcely less notable foundations. Though the Order was spread all over England, from Robertsbridge in Sussex and Buckland in Devonshire, to Holme Cultram in Cumberland and Newminster in Northumberland, Yorkshire was richest in possession of its monasteries, and long before the events of the sixteenth century had well merited the honour of being called the home of the Cistercians.

7. Citeaux.

Somewhere about the year 1075 there was founded at Molesme, in Burgundy, a Benedictine house of which one Robert was abbot. We may imagine it to have been an undivided house at its inception, but it had certainly become a house of dissension before the end of the century. One party amongst its members—probably the larger—was for leaving things as they were, or as they had become; the other was full of zeal for reform, or at least for a stricter observance of the rule of St. Benedict. At the head of the reforming party

was the abbot himself; he was supported by his prior, Alberic; he also had the support of one who was to become of far greater fame in Cistercian annals then either—Stephen Harding, an Englishman of Sherborne in Dorset, who, after certain sojournings amongst the Benedictine monasteries of France, had joined the community at Molesme, and at the time of the dissension was sub-prior. What the particular nature of the dissension was does not clearly appear, but the section which opposed reform was evidently stronger than that headed by the abbot, for in 1098 he was seeking permission from Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons, to leave Molesme, and to found a new community elsewhere, and in the same year, he, Alberic, and Stephen Harding, accompanied by eighteen other monks, departed. Their first proceedings were akin to those which were subsequently much in evidence in Cistercian history—after certain wanderings they found what they considered a suitable site for a house in a lonely forest near Citeaux, and there decided to settle. The *Exordium*, printed in Guignard, states, with some care, that the consent of the owner of that site was properly obtained—a not unimportant matter, for, as Mr. Micklethwaite has pointed out, prospective builders of monastic houses had a trick of establishing themselves on land which did not belong to them, and where difficulties arose they usually succeeded in holding their own. Here, however, there was no difficulty, and the reformers proceeded to clear the ground and to build themselves a habitation, fashioned, at first, of the wood they had cut down. It was doubtless a poor enough place, this first house of Citeaux, and Robert, duly appointed abbot by the Bishop of Chalon, had probably no idea that his abbey was to become famous for all time as the cradle of the Cistercian Order.

8. The Second Abbot.

But Citeaux was not then Cistercian in the sense in which we understand the word. Its first members had

no other thought than that of keeping the rule of St. Benedict, in spirit and in letter. There are no evidences that they intended to inaugurate a new Order, with a new constitution and new rules, when they left Molesme and its lax brethren. And before they had long gone apart, those whom they had left behind desired the return of at least one of them. Perhaps the bravery of the separatists in going forth into the solitude stirred some regret, awakened some sleeping conscience, in the monks of Molesme—at any rate, we very soon find them ardently desiring the return of their old abbot, without whose presence, they said, there would be no peace in their midst, nor any hope of restoring the ancient rule. And in the year following the exodus, against his own will, but in obedience to papal behest, Robert returned to Molesme, and Alberic was elected Abbot of Citeaux in his place. He ruled the house for nearly ten years. They were years of poverty—years, too, of strict and rigid obedience to the principles for which the reformers had contended. So strictly indeed was the rule of St. Benedict observed in those early days of Citeaux, that those who thought of joining the community were chary of subjecting themselves to its rigid discipline, and the brotherhood under Alberic did not greatly increase. But in his time a certain amount of recognition and prosperity came to the house. Pope Paschal II, himself a Benedictine—of the reformed Cluniac Order—confirmed Citeaux in its rights and possessions: Otho, Duke of Burgundy, showed some benevolence towards it. Doubtless the original wooden buildings were to some extent replaced by stone during this period, which served as an introduction to the great work that was to be done in the new century.

Stephen Harding.

It is to the successor of Alberic, to the third Abbot of Citeaux, to Stephen Harding, the Englishman of Sherborne, that we must look if we wish to see the real

founder of the Cistercian Order. When he succeeded Abbot Alberic in 1109 he was in his fiftieth year: he ruled Citeaux for twenty-two years; he framed its constitution, and drew up its rule of life; he boldly discarded the old name and announced the birth of the Cistercian Order of Monks; his own life was one of marked sanctity, and he was eventually accorded the honours of canonization. But although he formed Citeaux into a new congregation his first law based itself on the ancient rule of St. Benedict, literally observed. As for his ideas upon the new order of things which he himself was instituting, Newman, in the *Life of Stephen Harding*, which he wrote for the Oxford *Lives of the Saints*, thus epitomizes them: Anxious to avoid the disorders which he had seen in other monastic communities and systems, he "determined on instituting a system of reciprocal visitation between the abbeys of his Order. He might, as Abbot of Citeaux, have constituted himself the head of this increasing congregation; but his object was not to lord it over God's heritage, but to establish between the Cistercian abbeys a lasting bond of love. The body of statutes which he presented to his brethren in the general chapter of 1119, was called the Chart of Charity. In its provisions, the whole Order is looked upon as one family, united by ties of blood; Citeaux is the common ancestor of the whole . . . the Abbot of Citeaux was called *Pater universalis ordinis*; he visited any monastery that he pleased, and wherever he went the abbot gave up his place to him. On the other hand, the abbots of the . . . filiations . . . visited Citeaux, besides which each abbot went every year to inspect the abbeys which had sprung from his own. Every year a general chapter was held at Citeaux, which all the abbots in the Order, except some whose houses were in very distant countries, were obliged to attend under heavy penalties. . . . Each abbey was to receive with joy any of the brethren of other Cistercian abbeys, and to treat him as though he

were at home. Thus the most perfect union was to be preserved amongst the whole body." The *Charta Charitatis*, to which Newman here refers, was confirmed by Pope Calixtus II in 1119, and subsequently by several of his successors. It was certainly compiled by Stephen Harding himself, in collaboration with some of his fellow-religious, and under advice from various ecclesiastical authorities, called in as consultants. Before his death, in March 1134, he had also compiled the *Liber Usuum*, wherein were specified the various usages and ceremonies to be observed throughout the newly founded Order.

10. The Cistercian Simplicity.

While brotherly love, a warm and abiding charity, was to be the bond of union amongst the Cistercians, simplicity in all things was to be their distinguishing mark. Herein they offered a marked contrast to the Cluniacs, who, from the first, while adhering strictly to rigid monastic discipline, instituted and preserved a high standard of ritual, and furnished their churches in rich and splendid style, "counting nothing too good for the service of God." The Cluniac church was conspicuous for its painted glass and silken hangings; its sacramental vessels were of silver and gold, not seldom enriched with precious stones; its vestments were of silk and velvet; marble and alabaster supplemented the stone of the nearest quarry; the services of the altar were carried out with strict attention to pomp and ceremony. Far different was the Cistercian method, as conceived and laid down in rule by Stephen Harding and his associates. Anything which savoured of ostentation and superfluity was to be strictly avoided. The Cistercian houses were to be erected in lonely places—in some secluded valley, apart from men, for choice. Their architecture was to be plain and simple; high towers and rich ornament were forbidden; the windows were to be of plain glass, unpainted, unstained: paint-

ings and mural decorations were prohibited. Nor were carving and sculpture to find place; it was forbidden to introduce a triforium between the arches and roofs of nave or choir. There were to be no turrets, no pinnacles; whatever furniture was in the church was to be of the simplest. A similar austereness extended to the vestments. The chasubles were to be of plain linen, or of the material called fustian; it was strictly forbidden to ornament them with gold, silver, gems, or silk. The albs and amices were to be of linen: they, too, were to go without ornament, lace, or embroidery. The use of the cope and the dalmatic was forbidden. But the stoles and fanons might be of silk, so long as no decoration of silver or gold was added. The use of gold was prohibited entirely, even in the service of the altar. The Cistercian altar was plain even to baldness. Its cross was of painted wood. Its one candlestick—no more was allowed—was of iron; the thurible might be of either iron or copper. The cloths were of plain linen; the cruets of some inexpensive earthenware or metal; the chalice itself, and the pipe used for communicating, was of silver, but, if the authorities approved, the chalice might be gilt. Severe as all this was, it is easy to see how it fitted in with the idea of quiet dignity which characterized all that the original founders did and aimed at.

II. Monachi and Conversi.

From the first beginnings the members of the Cistercian Order were divided into two classes, strictly kept apart, yet each united and sharing in the common lot. They were distinguished as *monachi* (monks) and *conversi* (lay-brothers). The monk was a clerk of a certain amount of literacy, able at any rate to read and write; as in the case of the Benedictine rule, he was not of necessity a priest, though in practice most of the Cistercian monks were admitted to priest's orders. As a clerk, his chief duties were with church and cloister;

he had little to do with the business matters of his house, unless he happened for the moment to be occupying one of the many offices, and was for the time being, for instance, kitchener or infirmarer. The lay-brother was, as his name implied, a layman who had embraced the religious life, had served his time as a novice, and had in due course made his solemn profession. Usually —in the early days of the Order at any rate—quite illiterate, he was not allowed to learn reading or writing, and he was forbidden to take holy orders. During his novitiate he was taught certain prayers and psalms and passages of Holy Scripture (some of the *conversi* are said to have known the Psalter from end to end), and in a certain degree he observed the hours after the fashion of the *monachi*, attending part of the night-office, being present at Compline, and reciting certain prayers at the proper time. But his chief duty was the doing of his appointed work under the monastic regulations, on the farm, in the shearing-shed, at the mill, round the forge. He was governed by the same rules which governed the monk as to abstinence and silence, but his hours of sleep were so arranged as to fit him for hard manual labour. He and his brethren had their own rooms in the cloister; their own space in the church; their own infirmary; they also had their own chapter, though it was presided over by the abbot. As for garments, they were provided with stockings and boots, a tunic, a hood, and a cloak.

12. Manual Labour.

The founders of the Order, from the first, attached great importance to the value and dignity of work. Labour, done, not for the production of luxuries, but for useful and honest purposes, they placed on a level with the performance of the religious services of the church—to labour was as meritorious as to pray: prayer and labour combined, the one supplementing or, rather, mingling with the other, was to be the good

Cistercian ideal. And the labour on which they set their thoughts was manual labour. The Benedictine rule had encouraged work—but the work to which the Benedictines had invariably turned was work in scholarship; their labour lay amongst books and papers. The Cistercian rule sent men to the fields, the grange, the workshop—it may be that one reason why it was so eagerly embraced in its first period was because, in addition to giving men weary of the world a safe religious retreat, it afforded them abundance of healthy occupation. No man sat with idly folded hands in a Cistercian house. He was at the plough, or grinding the corn, or drawing the water, or shearing the sheep, or fashioning iron-work in the smithy, or melting ore at the forge, or working in the lead-mine; always he was busy. As a rule the *conversi* worked in silence, but the blacksmiths were allowed to talk, and the other trades had rooms outside their workshops wherein conversation was permitted under certain regulations. The rule of silence extended to encounters with folk of the outside world; nevertheless, if a stranger asked for information it was to be given him with all courtesy, coupled with an intimation that the giver must not enter into further exchange of words.

13. Cistercian Colleges.

Manual labour was shared in, also, by the monks; in this respect there was little difference between them and the lay-brothers. The Cistercian idea had no great leanings towards scholarship. "Nec presumat aliquis novas librorum exposiciones facere sine consensu capitali generalis," says the Statute. In time, however, certain of the members felt that more attention should be given to scholarship. Matthew Paris gives a reason for this feeling. The Dominicans and Franciscans, together with those secular clergy who had learning, began, evidently not over-delicately, to reproach the Cistercians with their deficiencies. And about 1250, an Abbot of

Clairvaux, Stephen of Lexington, an Englishman, feeling deeply pained by these reproaches, took upon himself, without authority of his brethren, but with permission from Rome, to found at Paris a college whereat Cistercian monks might gain the advantages to be had from the famous university. Later a similar college was established at Oxford—it, like the college in Paris, was dedicated to St. Bernard; St. Bernard's at Oxford is now the college we know as St. John's. Between St. Bernard's in Paris and Yorkshire there is an interesting link; part of the funds necessary to the keeping up of the Paris institution was obtained by impropriation of a moiety of the rectory of Rotherham. Nevertheless, in spite of these efforts, and of the sneers of the friars, the Cistercians were at no time a learned body, and from the time of their establishment in England to the days of their decline they remained steadfastly constant to their ideals of earnest prayer and equally earnest manual labour.

14. Architecture.

As the first rules and constitutions provided for future conduct of life and affairs, so also the original founders laid down the principles on which the Cistercian church and cloister were to be designed and built. The Cistercian church, even in its mere architecture, was to be as austere as the Cistercian ideal: we can gain some idea of it from the ruins remaining—and, in at any rate some instances, fortunately now being well guarded—in our own country. "Some of their earliest churches," writes Mr. A. H. Thompson in his *English Monasteries*, "as at Waverley and Tintern, had aisleless naves, short transepts, each with one rectangular chapel upon its eastern side, and an aisleless rectangular presbytery. This is a simple form of the normal Cistercian plan, which may be seen to perfection at Kirkstall and Buildwas, and was preserved with some modifications in a late rebuilding at Furness. The presbytery, aisleless and rectangular, projected some two bays east of

the crossing, the high altar being placed slightly in advance of the east wall. The western bay of the presbytery was covered on either side by two or three rectangular chapels ranged along the east side of the transepts, divided from each other by solid walling, but with a continuous eastern wall. The nave was aisled. The choir was in the usual position, in the crossing and the eastern bays of the nave, and was enclosed on north and south by stone walls which were built flush with the inner faces of the columns and across the length of the crossing. The lower entry of the choir was, as usual, in the middle of the *pulpitum*: the upper entries were doors in the side-walls close to the presbytery." According to the same authority Cistercian influence in the matter of architecture is traceable in many churches belonging to other Orders, while the feature of the rectangular chancel, so much in evidence in our larger fabrics, is also attributable to it.

15. The Cloister.

The arrangement of the Cistercian cloister may be studied in the plan of such a house as Fountains: it is, however, only architectural and archæological experts who can either understand or explain the niceties of such an arrangement, and it will be sufficient here if the principal parts of the cloistral dwelling are specified and their uses defined. Mr. Micklethwaite has pointed out that the plan of the Cistercian cloister is indicated by the order in which the various parts are ordered to be visited in the customary Sunday procession, which passed in turn by way of chapter-house, parlour, dorter, rere-dorter, warming-house, frater, kitchen, and cellarer's building. The purposes of these various parts are explained by their names. In the chapter-house the members of the community assembled for the daily conference; in it, according to Guignard, the confessions of the monks (not of the lay-brothers) were ordinarily heard; it contained the presidential chair of

the abbot; it was, so to speak, the justice-room and parliamentary theatre of the brotherhood. The parlour (*auditorium juxta capitulum*) was in some monastic houses used as a place in which visitors could be received, and in which business of the house was discussed by the inmates when strict silence was being observed in the cloister: by the Cistercians it appears to have been used for the novices or for the holding of school. The dorter was, of course, the sleeping-chamber, furnished with day-stairs and night-stairs—the last-named an easy method of access to the church; the rere-dorter a *domus necessaria*. The warming-house, or calefactory, was a common-room wherein fire was lighted from, generally, about the beginning of November to the end of March: that of Fountains contained two very large fireplaces; against its outer wall stood the wood-house, from which fuel was brought as it was needed. Close by was the frater, which, with the frater of the *conversi* and the kitchen, was, in the Cistercian houses, arranged on a distinctive plan, the kitchen being placed in the middle, and the two chambers served through cleverly contrived hatches in the walls. In the Cistercian arrangement the term cellarer's building was a wide one—it included storerooms, the living and working rooms of the *conversi*, accommodation for guests, the buttery, the cellarer's checker, or office, and his lodging. In addition to these principal parts there were others of scarcely less importance—the *infirmarium*, the *lavatorium*; there was the cloister itself, with its carrels (small studies), and there was the abbot's lodging. Not all Cistercian houses can show such a width of ground plan and multiplicity of arrangement as Fountains, which in time became possessed of vast wealth; the smaller houses perhaps correspond more closely to the original simplicity of design. In one particular the Cistercian plan is notable: it remained unique; no other Order fell under its influence so far as to copy its peculiar features.

16. Strict Monachism.

In considering the ordinary life of a Cistercian house, it should be remembered that it was primarily based on the rule of St. Benedict, for the better and truer observance of which the first settlers of Citeaux had forsaken Molesme. All that Stephen Harding and his associates did was to supplement that rule. The *Charta Charitatis* of 1119; the *Exordium* of 1120; the various constitutions and precepts which followed, until the Order was soundly based, were all intended, not to supplant, but to fix more firmly in the minds of the brethren the principles which St. Benedict had laid down centuries earlier. The early Cistercians were reminded that first of all and last of all they were monks. Most of them were laymen. There were, of course, many amongst them who were in holy orders; some were in priest's orders. But their life would have gone on, have kept its peculiar object in view, had there been no clergy amongst them. Their motive was the continual praise of God in the sanctuary, and their lot common labour in field or workshop. From the moment of his profession until the hour of his death, the Cistercian's life was a regular and an even one. Save when he was discharging the duties of some office entrusted to him by the abbot, his whole time was given to church and cloister and work. Day out, day in, he was either on his knees in prayer or using his strength in honest labour. To this had God called him.

17. The Hours.

It was no easy life. St. Benedict himself had not meant it to be an easy life; the first Cistercian made St. Benedict's rule even heavier than he had left it. Under the new constitution the day and the night were each fixed as of twelve hours' duration, but the hours were of a length regulated by the season of the year.

Thus the night hours were short in summer, long in winter; the day hours, of course, were the exact opposite. Whatever the season of the year, however, the *Opus Dei* must be kept up—nothing must stand in its way, no cause, however apparently imperative, prevent its being carried out. Even in harvest, when it was necessary to husband the crops, and sometimes to work at high pressure to get them in, the regular round of service was preserved. Those who were near at hand must hasten to the church; those far off in the fields must stay their work and repeat the office where they stood. As regards the actual observance of the hours, the Cistercians, following St. Benedict, called matins *vigiliæ*. They rose for it at the eighth hour in the winter half of the year—2 A.M. Except on certain occasions it was immediately followed by the Office for the Dead: this over, the hours before dawn were spent in meditation or in reading; those who read were accommodated with lights placed by the book-presses in the cloister or in the chapter-house. At daybreak, on a signal from the abbot, the sacrist rang the bell, all returned into the church, and lauds, which the Cistercians called matins, was sung. In the summer months the hour of rising was so fixed that there was only a brief interval between vigils and matins—the first was shortened, and the Office for the Dead was transferred to evening. At this period of the year the hours of sleep were so reduced that a *meridian* was allowed. As a rule vigils was sung in darkness, the monks singing the Psalms from memory. Prime was sung at the first hour of the day—6 A.M. in the summer-time; terce, sext, and nones followed at the proper intervals. At six in the afternoon evensong was sung, followed soon afterwards by compline, and with this the daily office ended. But in addition to the office, every monk was present at Mass once on ordinary days and twice on feasts. On ordinary days High Mass was sung immediately after prime; on feasts there was a second Mass after terce. Such of the monks

as were in priest's orders might say Mass privately, but there was no provision in the constitutions that they should be obliged to do so every day.

18. Holy Communion.

It was obligatory on every monk, unless he was prohibited by the abbot, to receive Holy Communion on Christmas Day, the Thursday before Easter, Easter Day, and Whitsun Day. But he who was prepared (the Statute says *qui potuerit*) was to receive every Sunday—if not on Sunday, then on some morning following during that week. The Order had certain methods of its own in saying Mass and administering Holy Communion, particularly as regards the making of the chalice, and the administration of the Sacred Species. As to the first, the deacon, after saying *Confiteor*, was to spread the corporal on the altar, and after rinsing the chalice with water, to minister bread upon the paten and wine in the chalice, helped by the sub-deacon. Whether done by deacon or sub-deacon, wine was first to be poured into the chalice, and then the cruet containing water was to be handed to the priest when he was ready, and he poured water into the chalice. Then the paten being set on the chalice and covered with the veil, the priest descended below the step on the right hand and said *Dominus Vobiscum*. It would seem from the *Liber Usuum*, and from Guignard, that the practice was to set the bread and wine, not on a credence table, but at the end of the altar. As to the administration, all communicants received in both kinds. The deacon, having been communicated by the priest with the Body, took the chalice from the altar and communicated himself with the Blood, standing, after which, if only a very few persons were to receive, he administered to them as they knelt, all clergy above the rank of sub-deacon being permitted to touch the chalice for the purpose of guiding it to their lips. But if there were many communicants, the *fistula* was used. This was a silver pipe

which was brought by the sub-deacon to the north end of the altar, whither the deacon carried the chalice after he had communicated himself. The communicants then received the Body at the hands of the priest at the south end of the altar, after which they passed behind him to the north end, where the sub-deacon held the chalice with both hands on the corner of the altar, and the deacon placed in it the *fistula*. The sub-deacon and the other communicants then received the Blood through the *fistula* standing. As they left the altar, the sacrist offered to each a drink of wine as an ablution. According to the constitution as quoted by Guignard, if there were many communicants, and hence need of more wine, the deacon filled up the chalice with unconsecrated wine, the Cistercian view evidently being that the unconsecrated element would receive consecration from the already consecrated Sacrament.

19. The Chapter.

Either after terce on ordinary days, or after the first Mass on festivals, the daily chapter was held, the abbot presiding when he was at home, the prior if he was absent. It was opened by the reading of the names of saints commemorated on the day; this was followed by the recitation of prayers for the faithful departed, after which certain passages from the Rule of St. Benedict were read. The duties assigned to each monk for the day were then announced: if any member desired to be excused, he at once stated his reasons. Formal commemoration of all dead brethren of the Order was then made, and on festivals this was succeeded by a short sermon. After this, special commemoration by name was made of those who had died recently, and letters were read announcing deaths in other houses of the Order. Then came the public confession and punishment. Any monk who was conscious of offence made acknowledgment and sought pardon. Any member might accuse another; the accused had the right of

defence. But no man who had been denounced might denounce his denouncer at the same chapter. The punishments meted out were fasting on bread and water; loss of precedence, and corporal chastisement—the last was carried out there and then. More serious faults were punished by expulsion or imprisonment: occasionally by excommunication. And all that passed in chapter was under strict secrecy, and was not to be talked of, once the community had left the chapter-house.

20. Daily Labour.

Now began the day's work, portioned out, as a rule, by the prior, who summoned the members to the parlour and assigned each his task. Silence was to be observed in working, save under licence, and no one might carry a book. In the early days the labour chiefly lay in clearing waste land, cutting down trees, laying out grounds and gardens, and in agricultural pursuits, and in building the first houses; later it extended to work in the mill, the smithy, the carpenters' shop, the forge, and the wool-warehouse. Those whose work kept them near the church repaired to it at the proper times for the due observance of the office; those who went far afield said the office at the place of their labours. On the minor festivals they worked as on ordinary days; the greater festivals they kept like Sunday, spending their time after chapter in reading. They might, if they were so minded, go into the church for private prayer, but due watch was kept to prevent this from degenerating into idleness: in the Cistercian idea, idleness had no place at any time.

21. Food and Drink.

But even monks must eat and they must sleep. For one-half of the year—which we may call the summer half—the Cistercians dined after sext, and supped after nones; on Wednesdays and Fridays, however, they

dined after nones and had no supper at all. In winter—which was reckoned as extending from the middle of September until Easter—they had but one meal a day, which was taken after nones, except in Lent, when it was served after evensong, but early enough to be eaten by daylight. As regards their diet they followed the old rule of St. Benedict with scrupulous fidelity. The daily allowance to each man was one pound of bread and a measure of drink, one-third being saved from dinner for supper, when supper was permitted. At dinner there were two cooked dishes—soups or vegetable messes, of course, for no flesh or fish was allowed, nor was it permitted to use lard in cooking. These cooked dishes were supplemented by green-stuff, at one time of the year; by fruit, at another. Strict order and ceremony was observed, in accordance with the manners and customs of polite folk, at all meal-times. If the abbot was not entertaining guests, he presided in the frater, where the tables were duly arranged and spread with linen cloths; one table stood at the end facing the door; the others were set against the walls on either side: in place of the abbot, the prior presided. When the brethren, having previously washed their hands, entered the frater, each bowed to the high table, and then stood by his own place until abbot or prior entered. He, on coming to his seat, rang a bell; the priest on duty for that week said grace, the brethren making response. Then all sat, and the reader in his pulpit on the west wall opened his book and began his reading. Due details as to behaviour are set forth in the constitutions. No man was to leave the room, nor to walk about. Salt must be taken with the point of the knife, not with the fingers; when a man drank, he was to hold his cup with both hands. He must not wipe knife nor fingers on the table-cloth, nor put his fingers into his cup. When the meal was over, the bell rang, the reader paused; all rose, walked to the church, singing the 51st Psalm, and there returned thanks. Certain

indulgences were made in the matter of food. The reader, the cook, and the cellarer, having had to wait for their dinner, were permitted a sort of lunch called *mixtum*--four ounces of bread and half a pint of drink—which they took earlier in the day. And the younger brethren, having bigger appetites, were also allowed *mixtum*, and consumed it before terce. During the summer months, when nights were short, there was an hour's sleep in the dorter after dinner; that over, the monks rose, washed, and repaired to the church for nones. Nones being sung, if there was no supper, he who desired it might obtain a drink in the frater, but it would seem from the rules that he had had to save this from his dinner. When there was any supper, it was followed by an assembly in the cloister, whereat one of the monks read aloud to his fellows from either the Bible or some pious work. This over, they repaired to the church, sang compline, and retired for the night.

22. Death.

In the case of each monk the quiet and orderly life came at last to its end, so far as this world was concerned. When death drew near, either the abbot, or, failing him, the priest next high in office, administered the last sacraments. The whole of the brotherhood were present —they first assembled in the church, and then walked in procession to the dying monk's side, singing psalms as they walked. As the last moment drew near, the sick man was laid upon the floor, on a bed of ashes, made in the form of a cross, over which, according to the Cistercian directions, a mat of straw, covered by a quilt, had been placed. The *tabula* (a wooden board hung in the cloister, with a wooden mallet attached to it) was beaten, and all who could hurried to the scene. So the Cistercian died, his brethren praying around his death-bed. As soon as the soul had departed, the body was washed and shrouded, the community meanwhile saying certain prayers and psalms in a place close by.

To them the body was brought when ready, and the abbot having sprinkled and censed it, it was carried into church in procession, with the singing of more psalms. If death took place before dinner, Mass for the dead was said as soon as the body had been carried to church, and burial followed immediately afterwards. But if death took place after dinner, Mass and interment were postponed until next morning: in the interval a continuous office for the dead was kept up in the church by monks detailed for the service. Burial was carried out in the graveyard at the east end of the church; for thirty days special mention was made of the dead man in church and chapter, and for ever, year after year, as the anniversary of his release from the world came round, and letters announcing his death were sent round to all other houses of the Order, so that their members might join in the prayers offered on his behalf. One more custom of the Cistercians in relation to their departed was that at every meal a share of food was set apart in the name of the dead, and was subsequently handed to the poor who came about the gates.

23. Life of the Conversi.

The daily life of the lay-brothers was somewhat different to that of the monks, though the difference was only slight. They lived partly in the abbey, partly in the granges on the abbey lands. They kept the hours in different fashion, saying the psalms and prayers, the *Credo*, the *Pater Noster*, and the *Gloria Patri*, which they had been taught by heart—openly, if they were not in church; privately, in the church itself, so as not to interrupt the choir office. They were not required to rise as early as the monks, who had sung vigils in winter, and matins in summer, before the lay-brothers rose. When they rose they said their own office up to prime, after which they went to their work. Their Sunday and non-working days were kept exactly as the monks kept theirs; on these days they heard Mass

twice. They were required to communicate seven times a year; those who dwelt in the granges were expected to attend the abbey church for this purpose, but if they were a long way out they could obtain leave from the abbot to communicate elsewhere, at some convenient parish church of the neighbourhood. They regularly heard sermons in the chapter-house; three times a year—at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide—they held their own chapter, which was conducted on the same system as that of the monks. They had a prior of their own, and he presided at their meals; they had the same meals which were served to the monks. But they had a privilege which the monks were denied—the lay-brother not only had a *mixtum* of half a pound of bread—the best bread—but he might eat as much as he pleased of the coarser bread. Neither was he expected to fast as the monks did. In life, then, his life was not quite so hard as that of the monk's: in death, he was treated precisely as a monk was.

24. Spread of the Order.

Such, briefly outlined, was the life which Stephen Harding and his early associates set themselves to live, and imposed upon all who came to them in their day, and essayed to follow them when that day was over. Hard and self-denying as the rule was, repelling some, there were always men who were eager to embrace it. The new Order began to spread in its very infancy. Four years after Harding became Abbot of Citeaux, the first daughter-house was founded at La Ferté; it was succeeded, within the next few years, by others at Pontigny, Clairvaux, and Morimond. From one or other of these other houses sprang in due course. Later, it received an accession of strength by the adhesion of the Order of Savigny, another reformed Benedictine community, and it quickly spread over the Western countries of Europe, so much so, indeed, that a General Chapter of 1152 thought it advisable to prohibit any

further increase in the number of houses, which, within fifty years, had already reached well over three hundred. But the increase went on in spite of that, and in addition to the usual establishments the Order came to possess seven associated orders of knighthood, of which the best known was that of the Templars.

25. St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

Just as the foundation of the Cistercian Order was due to the zeal and piety of one man, Stephen Harding, so to the extraordinary genius and ability of one man, and that one of Harding's own monks at Citeaux, must be attributed the marvellous way in which it spread between 1113 and 1152. That man was the famous Bernard of Clairvaux, with whom Yorkshiremen were to have much close relationship in the days to come. Born in 1090, the son of a Crusader and of a mother who sprang from a noble family of Burgundy, Bernard, at the age of twenty-three, entered the new house at Citeaux and became quickly distinguished for his zeal, his piety, and his administrative powers. When the extension of the Order became necessary, he led forth a chosen band to Clairvaux, amongst the woods and solitudes of Champagne, and there founded the house which, because of his association with it, was quickly to become equally famous with its parent of Citeaux. In some respects, he, perhaps, was even more of a founder of Cistercianism than Harding himself. From his love of retirement came the saying, *Bernardus valles amabat*; from the soldier instinct in him doubtless grew the Cistercian description of their Order—*novi milites Christi cum paupere Christo pauperes*. For Bernard was not only monk and mystic, but the zealous inciter of warfare against the Infidels who held the Holy Places; had he not been a monk he would have been a Crusader, like his father before him; it was in his power to lead the Second Crusade; it was only the failure of his bodily powers that stayed him in preaching the Third.

Remote as Clairvaux was in his time, the fame of its abbot rang through Europe: Bernard, indeed, familiar to most of us in those hymns of his composing which appeal to all Christians, was, as Freeman has called him, "the Last of the Fathers, the Counsellor of Popes and Kings." "In speech, in writing, in action," says Gibbon, "Bernard stood high above his rivals and contemporaries; his compositions are not devoid of wit and eloquence; and he seems to have preserved as much reason and humanity as may be reconciled with the character of a saint. In a secular life he would have shared the seventh part of a private inheritance; by a vow of poverty and penance, by closing his eyes against the visible world, by the refusal of all ecclesiastical dignities, the Abbot of Clairvaux became the oracle of Europe, and the founder of one hundred and sixty convents. Princes and pontiffs trembled at the freedom of his apostolical censures; France, England, and Milan consulted and obeyed his judgment in a schism of the Church. . . . He shone as the missionary and prophet of God who called the nations to the defence of His Holy Sepulchre." "There have been other men," says Archbishop Trench, speaking of St. Bernard, ". . . who by their words and writings have ploughed deeper and more lasting furrows in the great field of the Church, but probably no man during his lifetime ever exercised a *personal* influence in Christendom equal to his, who was the stayer of popular commotions, the queller of heresies, the umpire between princes and kings, the counsellor of popes, the founder—for so he may be esteemed—of an important religious order, the author of a crusade."

26. The Order in England.

Through St. Bernard of Clairvaux the link between Yorkshire and the Order of which he remains the greatest ornament is forged: between him and Rievaulx and Fountains the connexions are strong. But although the

Cistercian Order became more firmly and proudly established in Yorkshire than in any other English county, Yorkshire was not the first county in which a Cistercian house was set up. That honour belongs to Surrey. Near Farnham in that county there lie the poor fragments of the first English Cistercian house, known in its time as the Abbey of Waverley. So completely was the work of destruction and spoliation carried out here that few people who look on the ruins can realize that the church was one of the finest in England, and occupied its builders for seventy-five years. Waverley was founded within thirty years of the migration of Robert and his companions from Molesme to Citeaux; about fifteen years after St. Bernard left Citeaux for Clairvaux. In 1128 William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester, brought over to his diocese a company of Cistercian monks from Aumone in Normandy, gave them a site at Waverley, and laid their foundation-stone with his own hands. He died shortly afterwards, but his successor, Henry de Blois, a monk of the Benedictine Order, and brother to King Stephen, continued his predecessor's patronage, and gave the new community many possessions and privileges. True to the Cistercian tradition—new as that was—this first English house soon sent out new colonies. Garendon, in Leicestershire, was the first; Ford, in Devonshire, the second; Combe, in Warwickshire, the third; Thame, in Oxfordshire, the fourth. Other houses were colonized from these; in all, Waverley was parent-house to eleven Cistercian settlements. The Order spread all over England; there were few counties into which it did not penetrate. At the time of the Dissolution the Cistercian Order had houses at Newminster, in Northumberland; Holme Cultram and Calder, in Cumberland; Whalley and Furness, in Lancashire; Rievaulx, Byland, Jervaulx, Fountains, Salley, Kirkstall, Roche, and Meaux, in Yorkshire; Stanlaw Vale Royal, and Combermere, in Cheshire; Dieulacres, Hulton, and Croxden, in Stafford; Rufford, in Notting-

ham ; Louth Park, Kirksted, Revesby, Swineshead, and Vaudry, in Lincoln ; Buildwas, in Shropshire ; Garendon, in Leicester ; Pipewell, in Northampton ; Sawtre, in Huntingdon ; Merivale, Combe, Stoneleigh, and Bordesley, in Warwick ; Sibton, in Suffolk ; Dore, in Hereford ; Flaxley and Hayles, in Gloucester ; Thame and Rewley, in Oxford ; Bittlesden and Medmenham, in Buckingham ; Wardon and Woburn, in Bedford ; Tilbey, Coggeshall, and Stratford, in Essex ; Boxley, in Kent ; Robertsbridge, in Sussex ; Netley and Beaulieu, in Hampshire ; Waverley, in Surrey ; Bindon, in Dorset ; Kingswood and Stanley, in Wiltshire ; Cleve, in Somerset ; Ford, Dunkerwall, Newenhall, Buckfast, and Buckland, in Devon ; St. Mary Grace, in London ; Quarr, in the Isle of Wight ; Tintern, Grace Dieu, and Llanfarnam, in Monmouth ; Neath and Margan, in Glamorgan ; Whitland, in Carmarthen ; Strata Florida, in Cardigan ; Cwmhyre, in Radnor ; Cymmer, in Merioneth ; Strata Marcella, in Montgomery ; Valle Crucis and Aberconway, in Denbigh ; and Basingwork, in Flint. But these were not all : they were only the houses of principal importance ; it is usually calculated that about one hundred Cistercian abbeys were dissolved, and there were also a great many nunneries—there were ten in Yorkshire—in which the Cistercian rule was observed.

27. The Twelfth-Century Revival.

Of these numerous houses at least three-fourths were founded in the twelfth century—that is, within a hundred years of the first founding of Citeaux itself. There is perhaps a reason for it. England in the twelfth century was experiencing all the joy and enthusiasm of a great and widespread revival of religion. It was all the greater, all the more productive of genuine and lasting enthusiasm because it was closely allied with a revival of national feeling. Green, writing of this renaissance, points out the difference between the conditions under which Englishmen in general and Churchmen in par-

ticular had lived in the first period of the Norman rule, and those which began with the reign—though not till towards its close, and then not with the wish—of the first Henry. "Pious, learned, and energetic as the bishops of William's appointment had been, they were not Englishmen. Till Beket's time no Englishman occupied the throne of Canterbury; till Jocelyn, in the reign of John, no Englishman occupied the See of Wells. In language, in manner, in sympathy, the higher clergy were thus completely severed from the lower priesthood and the people, and the whole influence of the Church, constitutional as well as religious, was for the moment paralysed. Lanfranc, indeed, exercised a great personal influence over William, but Anselm stood alone against Rufus, and no voice of ecclesiastical freedom broke elsewhere the silence of the reign of Henry the First. But at the close of the latter reign and throughout that of Stephen, the people, left thus without shepherds, was stirred by the first of those great religious movements which England was to experience afterwards in the preaching of the Friars, the Lollardism of Wyclif, the Reformation, the Puritan enthusiasm, and the mission-work of the Wesleys. Everywhere in town and country men banded themselves together for prayer, hermits flocked to the woods. Noble and Church welcomed the austere Cistercians . . . as they spread over the moors and forests of the North. A new spirit of devotion woke the slumber of the religious houses, and penetrated alike to the home of the noble Walter d'Espec at Rievaulx, or of the trader Gilbert Beket in Cheapside. . . . We see the strength of the new movement in the new class of ecclesiastics that it forces on the stage; men like Anselm or John of Salisbury, or the two great prelates who followed one another after Henry's death in the See of Canterbury, Theobald and Thomas, derived whatever might they possessed from sheer holiness of life or unselfishness of aim. The revival left its stamp on the fabric of the constitution itself: the paralysis of the

Church ceased as the new impulse bound the prelacy and people together, and its action, when at the end of Henry's reign it started into a power strong enough to save England from anarchy, has been felt in our history ever since."

28. Religious Orders in Yorkshire, 1130.

Before the first settling of the Cistercians in the county, Yorkshire possessed few religious houses in comparison with the number which sprang up during the twelfth-century revival. At what is now Whitby and was then Streaneshalh, Hilda, Abbess of Hartlepool, had founded a monastery for men and women in the year 657; destroyed and ravaged by the Danes about 870, it had lain in ruins for two hundred years, when, about 1074, one Reinfried—"miles strenuissimus in obsequio domini Willielmi"—re-established it as a priory which was subsequently elevated to the dignity of an abbey in 1109. Twenty years previous to the last date, a secession from Whitby, under Stephen, one of the monks, had resulted in the foundation of the great Abbey of St. Mary at York. About the same time the Priory of Holy Trinity at York was founded by Ralph Paganel, holder of large estates in Yorkshire and elsewhere. Thirty years earlier had witnessed the founding of Selby Abbey by William the Conqueror himself—the first great religious house established in the North of England since the Conquest. These four houses were of the Benedictine Rule. At Pontefract, about 1090, Robert, son of Ilbert de Lacy, first builder of Pontefract Castle, founded the Cluniac Priory of St. John. Three afterwards famous houses of Augustinian Canons were established between 1120 and 1130. At Embsay, near Skipton, in the first-named year, William Meschines and Cecilia, his wife, set up the priory which was translated to Bolton, in Wharfedale, thirty years later, by Alice de Romilly, their daughter. About the same time, 1120, Ralph Aldlaver, confessor to Henry I,

founded Nostell Priory, on a site which had previously been occupied by a congregation of hermits A year earlier, 1119, Guisborough Priory had been founded by Robert de Bruce, on the express admonition of Pope Calixtus II, who granted the new house its charter of confirmation. In addition to these principal Yorkshire establishments there were some smaller foundations, such as Kirkham, and there were several houses of nuns of the Benedictine observance.

29. The Cistercian Settlement in Yorkshire, 1131–1150.

The coming of the Cistercians to Yorkshire is directly attributable to St. Bernard and to Clairvaux; the first Cistercian house in the county was not colonized from Waverley, nor from any of the new houses which owned Waverley as parent; it sprang direct from the house which under St. Bernard's rule was rapidly eclipsing Citeaux in fame. Already St. Bernard was looking far afield; doubtless the news of the revival of religion in England came to him at Clairvaux; from Clairvaux he sent certain of his monks across the Channel to see what could be done in the way of establishing new colonies. He wisely chose as their leader one who was an Englishman—William, eventually first Abbot of Rievaulx. William and his little band of associates came over about 1130–31, carrying a letter from St. Bernard to Henry I, wherein he prayed the King to assist these messengers of the Lord to reclaim those who had been taken captive in the toils of Satan. Henry, in spite of his aloofness to the new English movement, is credited with having received the Cistercians graciously and to have given them free licence to preach the Gospel. Naturally their eyes sought a resting-place wherein to set up a house. There were reasons why the North of England seemed most favourable to their purpose. The South was already well furnished with religious houses: from London to Bristol, and southward to the sea,

RIEVAULX

abbeys and priories were in plenty; London alone possessed at that time thirteen conventual establishments and a hundred parish churches; between Thames and Trent there were many houses of religious rule. But north of the Trent there still remained vast solitudes; in Yorkshire especially, not yet, nor for some time to come, recovered from the terrible harrying of the North, there were great tracts of country, destitute of population, more lonely than those wildernesses in which Citeaux and Clairvaux, La Ferté and Pontigny, had been set up. Doubtless William and his monks heard of the Yorkshire moors and the Yorkshire dales—their solitude, far from the world, would appeal to the Cistercian temperament. It may be that some of the new-comers journeyed to the North, and looked on its wildness for themselves. How wild, how lonely, how sparsely peopled Yorkshire then was, we of this age cannot conceive. The total population of the county in 1130 cannot have exceeded fourteen thousand people, and that is crediting it with having doubled itself since the Domesday Survey of 1085, which, considering everything, is not very probable. If solitude was the chief thing to be desired, then Yorkshire was all that the most solitude-loving monk could desire. But before William and his monks journeyed North to a definite settlement, they certainly performed a spell of mission-work in the South. William himself is said to have wrought great effect by the wonderful eloquence of his preaching. And it is probable that it was during this period, probable, too, that it was in or about the Royal Court in London, that he met one Walter Espec, Lord of Helmsley, in the north of Yorkshire, a patron of religion who had already founded Kirkham Priory, on the banks of the Derwent, for the Augustinian Canons, and who now gave to the little company from Clairvaux a piece of land in the neighbourhood of his own manor; *in loco horroris et vastæ solitudinis*, says the Cistercian chronicler. Here, then, is the beginning of the history of the Cistercian Order in York-

shire ; as in the case of Citeaux and its daughter-houses, the beginning was of a marvellous swiftness. Rievaulx was founded in 1131 ; Fountains in 1132 ; Byland in 1143 ; Jervaulx in 1145 ; Salley in 1146 ; Roche and Kirkstall in 1147 ; and Meaux in 1150. Thus within twenty years the eight great Cistercian Abbeys of Yorkshire sprang into existence, and began to exercise an influence upon the folk around them which was destined to be political and economic and social as well as religious.

CHAPTER II

POVERTY

1. Idealism and Reality.

The unthinking man who on some holiday seeks out Fountains or Jervaulx for the purpose of spending a few idle hours amongst delightful scenery, and who has little conception of what the ruins amongst which he picnics really mean, is apt to make some very serious mistakes about the past—if he allows himself to think of it at all. He is not very sure about the old monks who once lived in these places; he has heard that there were black monks and white monks, and he is far from certain whether the colours mentioned refer to their skins or their gowns; it all happened so very long ago that it scarcely seems worth while to waste a thought on the matter. But he is very sure of one thing—these monks were sharp fellows, who had an eye for a pleasant situation, and took good care to settle amidst rich meadows and fine woodland. They must have had money, too, he is sure—otherwise how could they have built such a mighty church, and the vast buildings adjoining it? He has dim notions that once upon a time the roofless sanctuaries blazed with colour; that there was gold and silver in the sacristy; that a life of rare ease was spent within the walls, some fragment of which shelters him from the hot sun; the memory of popular pictures, seen in his town art-gallery, is in his mind—pictures of fat and jolly monks at their wine, or knives in hand round a baron of beef, or pulling plump fish from a placid river. Of course, he says, it was a

delightful life : nothing to do but to eat and drink and lie in the sun, as he is doing, with all these beautiful trees whispering in the soft winds, and the stream murmuring at the edge of the carefully kept grounds, and a general lotus-eater-like existence in a fine house—certainly, they were wise in their generation. And—it was all a long time ago, and there is nothing like it now, but . . . they were fortunate fellows, let them be black or let them be white. But supposing one were to sit down by such a man—who is, after all, a type of a vast number of us, drawn from more classes than one—and to tell him quietly that the fair prospect before him was made by the monks out of desert and wilderness, that they planted the woods, laid out the grounds, tilled the fields, improved the herbage, perhaps diverted and deepened the river ; that they did all this with strenuous labour, and much sweat, and in great privation ; that they dressed the stone on which he sits, raised the walls which shelter him ; planted, in short, a habitation in what had been a solitude—would he thank his informant for the news ? Far from it—his own picture would have suffered. It is not of the poor beginnings of the abbey that the average man cares to think, but of the abbey in all its grandeur and its wealth, with the glamour of medievalism on it, and the soft light of romance, and a good deal of fancy which has no basis in plain fact. Most of us would far rather look on Landseer's conventional *Bolton Priory in the Olden Time* than on the first monks of Fountains making a mess of food from the leaves of the trees in Skeldale.

2. The Original Benefaction.

Of all the eight Cistercian houses of Yorkshire there was not one which arose in anything but what people would nowadays call a highly undesirable surrounding. We are apt to misunderstand in these matters. We read of the pious founder, and of his gift of so many carucates of land in this or that dale—in the course of

our travels we reach the place; we see the ruins of a noble cloister, and a massive church, set amidst ideal scenes, and we immediately conclude that it was always there, or, at any rate, that these things sprang into existence as at a touch of the wizard's wand. Moreover, we are easily misled as to the precise nature of the pious benefactions of the pious founder: the real truth about him is that he gave away a very cheap commodity. What was the value of nine carucates of land in Ryedale, of twenty in Skeldale, of six in Craven, or seven in Holderness, in the middle of the twelfth century? What, indeed, was the value of the whole monastic lands lumped together in the year 1300? Put into plain language and truthfully, the facts as to the pious foundations are these—a community asked some landowner for a site, or he was moved to give them a site; he gave them certain barren, non-producing acres, and left them to make the best of his gift. They turned the waste land into good land; they planted the trees; they improved the stream; they made corn grow where thistles had sprung unchecked; they filled the meadows with cattle and stocked the uplands with sheep; they quarried the stone and built church and cloister, living in mud huts or in wattled cotes in the meantime; and when their labours were done and—in equally plain language—the thing began to pay, the Crown put in an appearance, and spoke of tribute in the shape of taxes or forced contributions. We all know that John seized the wool of the Cistercians for his brother Richard's ransom, granted them favours for giving it, and then demanded equivalents for those favours. We know, too, that Richard himself at the Council of Nottingham in 1194 took the Cistercian wool—or rather, demanded it, and was appeased by a pecuniary fine. In 1202, when John was actually King, the Cistercian wool was again demanded; it was then, "as before and after," remarks Stubbs, "a tempting bait to his avarice, a source of profit easily assessed and easily seized."

3. Rievaulx in 1131.

But, says the objector, that a man should be asked to give, presupposes that those who ask of him know that he is well able to give, and the wool affairs of 1194 and 1202 are only good proof that the Cistercians were by that time flockmasters on an extensive scale. They were. By that time they already possessed flocks and herds and horses and houses and lands—they had passed out of the stage of poverty. But each of the Yorkshire communities knew poverty intimately in the beginning. Some knew it more—far more—than others, but all tasted of it. It was in no land flowing with milk and honey that the first house was established at Rievaulx on the land given by Walter Espec. Many people are familiar with the peculiar beauty of Rievaulx as we see it to-day—the quiet valleys, the silent moors, the grey venerable ruin : let those who do, ask themselves what this still solitary bit of country must have been like eight hundred years ago ? True, to the nine carucates of land, somewhere about his manor of Helmsley, Walter Espec had added wood and pannage in the forest. The wood would be useful in more ways than one ; so, too, would the right of pannage, when they got some swine to turn out. But, grand though it seems, what would be the value of land anywhere about Helmsley in these first days at Rievaulx ? Helmsley then could not possibly be more than a mere collection of miserable huts : as for land in its neighbourhood, it was only sixty years since William had harried every Yorkshire acre northward from the line of the Aire and the Calder, and there could not have been any great recovery in that time. However Rievaulx benefited in later times—as it, of course, did—from Walter Espec's original grant, and from his further benefaction in 1145, it would gain little profit from his generosity at first, and its original community was doubtless as hard put to it as the first monks of Fountains were to be a year or two later.

4. Walter Espec.

Nevertheless, in their eyes—and quite properly—Walter Espec remained for ever a noble figure. The third Abbot of Rievaulx, Ailred, who was something of an historian, and wrote an account of the Battle of the Standard, at which Walter Espec fought, left a pen-picture of the old knight as he appeared when venerableness had come upon him, as the first tinge of russet comes on the oak. "An old man and full of days," he writes, "quick-witted, prudent in council, moderate in peace, circumspect in war, a true friend, and a loyal subject. His stature was passing tall, his limbs all of such size as not to exceed their just proportions, and yet to be well matched with his great height. His hair was still black, his beard long and flowing, his forehead wide and noble, his eyes large and bright, his face broad but well featured, his voice like the sound of a trumpet, setting off his natural eloquence of speech with a certain majesty of sound." It seems sad that the prevalent legend as to the founding of Rievaulx should be but a legend—invented, or put together, on inaccurate information, by some medieval chronicler. That ran to the effect that Walter Espec founded Kirkham, Rievaulx, and Warden in memory of an only son who was killed by a fall from his horse—a legend closely related to that of Bolton Priory. But Walter Espec never had a son, so far as is known; Abbot Ailred speaks of him as a childless man, and in the foundation charter of Rievaulx, amongst the long list of names of those for whose benefit the house was established, and for whom, of course, the prayers of the brethren were asked, there is no mention of the founder's son, as there most certainly would have been had he ever possessed one.

5. The Secession from York.

Obscure and poor as the first Cistercian settlers in Yorkshire must have been, the fame of their sanctity

soon reached certain ears in the great Benedictine abbey of St. Mary in York. There was dissension there, as there had been at Molesme. For the monks of St. Mary's, forgetting the rule of their founder Benedict, had fallen into great laxity. The story of what was done in those days was told, years afterwards, by one Serlo, who, though he was well stricken in years at the time of telling, possessed, he said, an unimpaired memory, and could tell what he had actually seen and known. Sometime about 1131–32 certain of the monks of York began to be sore afflicted in conscience. The rule was not being observed; there were grave fallings-away. The conscience-stricken banded themselves together and talked of reform: they carried their grievances to the prior, Richard, "a religious and God-fearing man, wise in worldly matters, a friend of those in power, for the reverence due to his piety made him beloved and honoured by all"; Richard, they found, shared their distress. He became spokesman to the abbot, to whom he seems to have spoken with no lack of candour. "How," he asked, "can we be so mad as to call ourselves monks of the blessed Benedict, who forbids with many threats all those things which we in our great presumption are not afraid to do? For while some of us go into church after collation, others wander away for trifling and useless chatter, as if the malice of the day were not sufficient unless that of the night were also added. And why recall our extravagance in diet? For many dishes are added over and above what was ordered by the blessed Benedict, giving the wicked impression that the Rule is best observed where the greatest superfluity can be enjoyed. Why should I speak of our exquisite delicacies, our variously flavoured sauces, our many dainties? Assuredly new stimulation is applied to the full and over-gorged belly, so that, while there is hardly a scrap of room left in it, the voluptuous desire of eating still grows. The same is true of the agreeable and splendid variety of drinks, of

the elaborate delicacy of raiment. These were not the sentiments or the teachings of our blessed Benedict, according to whose Rule we make our profession. Let us gather together these ill-natured frivolities, this vain and harmful gossip, these luxurious feastings, these frequent and splendid potations, the other countless superfluities, and we shall make a foul and noisome heap." Plain words, but there were still plainer to follow. "We lust after all things," continued the bold prior, "we lose our tempers, we quarrel, we seize the goods of others, we claim our rights by lawsuits, we protect fraud and lying, we follow the flesh and its desires. We live for ourselves, we please ourselves, we fear to be conquered, we glory in conquering, we oppress others, we shrink from being oppressed, we envy others, we glory in our success, we make merry and grow fat on the sweat of others, the whole world cannot hold our malice." And then he went on to speak of a better way. Lately, he said, there had come into these parts the men of Clairvaux. How clearly the Gospel had come to life again in them! They were seeking not their own, they served not the god Mammon, they desired not their neighbours' property, they were content with the modest culture of their ground and the use of cattle; plainly they were an example. Let the brethren of York hasten to follow in these Gospel-like steps, lest destruction, speedy and terrible, come upon them.

6. The Abbot of St. Mary's.

Godfrey was Abbot of St. Mary's at that time, and he was an exceeding old man. And, says the chronicler, he was "not over-pleased with what the prior said, for it is difficult to alter long-established habits at the sudden appearance of virtue." When he found that the prior and those who thought with him were seriously thinking of secession, and of setting up a new house on the principles of that at Rievaulx, "he was astounded at the novelty of the project, and thought it terrible

that in his old age there should happen such unwelcome events as the disgrace of his house, the desertion of his Order, the ruin of his sons." It is the old story, so often repeated—hidebound conservatism on one side, the desire for reform on the other. And seeing that persuasion was of no effect, Abbot Godfrey resorted to threats. "He threatened them with the discipline of the Order and severe penalties," but, observes the chronicler, "their intention was not contrary to the Lord's will." The more the abbot dissuaded and threatened, the more did the fire burn within them, fed with the fuel of fervour and faith. The issue was plain—let the house be reformed, purged, cleansed, or go they would.

7. Archbishop Thurstan.

They were not without a friend, these reformers, and he was in a high place. At that time Thurstan was Archbishop of York, and he was a personal friend of Prior Richard. Prior Richard went to him, and laid before him the whole matter, concealing nothing. True to their consciences he and his brethren of the reforming party would be, no matter at what cost. Then spoke the Archbishop, and said this was the work of God and not of man, and announced that he would hold a visitation of St. Mary's Abbey, and thereat give his decision. Godfrey, fearing what must ensue, prepared for Thurstan's coming. "He sent messengers to the monasteries throughout England and called together learned men, and collected no small multitude of monks to meet the Archbishop." Old as he was, Abbot Godfrey, one perceives, was still in possession of his wits—he was going to try the old game of setting Regulars against Seculars. And "when the day came the holy bishop appeared in a spirit of gentleness and peace, having in his train, as was fitting, grave persons and prudent clerics, canons, and others who were monks. The abbot met him at the door of the chapter-house, and, sur-

rounded by a great crowd of monks, refused admission, and declared that it was not lawful for him to visit them with so great a retinue, or for a Secular to be present at the secret meetings of the chapter. Let him dismiss the crowd, and enter alone, so that the discipline of the Order might not be disturbed by the insolence of clerics. The bishop was not willing that his followers should be removed, and said that he could not fittingly sit alone in so large a meeting without advisers, especially as they themselves had admitted many monks from distant places. Then the monks and the clergy broke out into tumult, and a violent quarrel took place in the cloister, one side pushing back, the other side trying to get in. On this the holy bishop commanded silence, and said, 'You withdraw from us to-day the obedience which you owe. Well, we withdraw that which by God's grace you hold from us; we interdict this monastery and by the authority we possess suspend the monks who remain in it from the Sacraments.' Having said this, he retired and entered the church with his retinue, and there followed him that holy band [the reformers], separated from the others even as the fat from the lean."

8. The Thirteen Reformers.

Thus came about the secession of the Benedictine monks from the degenerate abbey of St. Mary at York. They were thirteen in number: the old chronicler gives their names—Richard, the Prior of St. Mary's; Richard, at that time Sacristan; Ranulph, Thomas, Gamel, Hamo, Robert, Geofferey, Walter, Gregory, Ralph, Alexander, and another Robert, a monk of Whitby. They carried nothing away with them, save the habits they stood up in. Accordingly, they were homeless and penniless; they were like to want the next day's bread. But "the Lord provided for them: the venerable bishop, dealing with them in right episcopal fashion, received them into his house, and made provision for them in all things which appertained to the comfort of their bodies."

Meanwhile Abbot Godfrey, "in hatred of the new enterprise," wrote multitudinous letters to the whole episcopal bench, and to his fellow-abbots, complaining bitterly of what had been done. Somewhat to counteract this, Thurstan wrote a long letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, setting forth the true facts of the case, and prefacing it by the significant remark that (in the case of monastic houses) "when wealth comes, virtue fails"—a sure hint that in his opinion the Benedictines of York had been accumulating far too much earthly treasure for the good estate of their souls. In the letter he gives some account of the thirteen reformers: twelve of them, he says, are priests; the other is a sub-deacon. Many of them are learned men; all are seeking the true observance of their profession and the Gospel, and they are not to be deterred from their purpose by any man's violence, though their late brethren at St. Mary's are still full of rage and hatred. At present, having nowhere to go, they are lodged in the house of the blessed Peter—by which he means York Minster. Finally, he requests his brother archbishop, if Abbot Godfrey comes complaining to him, to give him some needed admonition not to oppose folk who in very truth seek to obey the Gospel of Christ. All of which shows us that in the twelfth century there were some very fine, honest, and upright Christian gentlemen in England, and that Archbishop Thurstan was one of them.

9. Origins of Fountains.

Nevertheless, not even an Archbishop of York can harbour thirteen men for ever, and before Christmas of that year came round it was necessary to do something for Prior Richard and his little band of faithful. Two of the thirteen had been tried—by the arts of the Evil One. Perhaps, thinks the chronicler, they "had not completely armed themselves with the shield of faith and prayer." "They yielded to the temptation, returned to their flesh-pots, and became a stumbling-block to

their friends and a scorn to their enemies." One, however, came back, and wiped off the stain of his temporary apostacy by a new conversion. But the other never came back—"his belly clave unto the ground." So when Archbishop Thurstan repaired to his palace at Ripon to keep his Christmas, taking the homeless monks with him, there were twelve of them. And at Ripon, while they all celebrated the solemn feast, he gave them a place wherein they might set up a house. It was, says Serlo, in his account given to Hugo, the Kirkstall monk, who wrote it all down in the days when John of York was Abbot of Fountains (1203–11), "A place uninhabited for all the centuries back, thick set with thorns, lying between the slopes of mountains and among rocks jutting out on both sides: fit rather to be the lair of wild beasts than the home of human beings." To this doubtful gift—for of what present advantage was a parcel of such land to men who had neither bread nor a penny-piece to buy it with?—Thurstan added the manor of Sutton; it, no doubt, was worth something less than Helmsley at that time, which means next to nothing. Nevertheless, the new brotherhood now had something, and they formed a chapter at Ripon, and solemnly debated the election of an abbot "who could go in and act before God as father and shepherd of their souls." The choice fell on Prior Richard. In him, a brave man, we see the first of the long line of Abbots of Fountains. No other abbot ever had such a task as his was. Monks he had, but he had no home for them. Land he had, and it was wild and desolate. Money he had none. And it was winter.

10. The Appeal to St. Bernard.

Winter as it was, Abbot Richard and his sons departed for Skeldale. There was an elm-tree in the middle of the valley; they made their lodging beneath it, covering themselves with straw and litter. Thurstan sent them bread; water from the river was their wine. Neverthe-

less, cheerful and steadfast, with no sign of gloom, no murmuring, but blessing God with all their hearts, poor in worldly goods, but strong and rich in faith, they kept the rule for whose sake they had forsaken the groaning tables and warm soft raiment of York. Night and day they stood under their elm and sang the Divine Office. By day they toiled hard; some plaited mats and wicker-work; some gathered and shaped wood to make a chapel; others cleared and cultivated the ground. Meanwhile they had written a full account of themselves to St. Bernard at Clairvaux; Archbishop Thurstan supplemented their letter with one of his own. In due course came a reply. This is the Finger of God, wrote Bernard, working subtly a wholesome change, not turning bad men into good, but good men into better. "A most rare bird on the earth," he remarks, "is a man who advances even a little from the stage he has once reached in religion." But Bernard did more than write: he sent to Abbot Richard and his brethren one of his own monks, Geoffrey de Amayo, as a visitor and counsellor. Serlo says that he himself, while yet a secular, saw this emissary. "He was of a great age and a modest gravity, a man strenuous in matters human and divine." He was received with thankfulness and his counsels and advice readily accepted: under his tuition the reformers built huts, made workshops, tilled the ground. He, on his part, was astonished to find such frugality, such obedience, such grave manners. They were, he said, strong in faith, rooted in love, patient in hope, most long-suffering in poverty. Poverty they certainly knew. The community had increased in number—seven clerics and ten laymen had come to join it. But it was still dependent on bread from the archbishop; and before long Thurstan had none to give. Famine came on the land; there was no corn, and therefore no bread. "They were driven to the last stage of want, and picking the leaves from the trees and gathering some lowly field-herbs they added a little

salt, and cooked pottage for the sons of the prophets." And once a wondrous thing came to pass. There came knocking at the gate a traveller, a poor man begging hard for a morsel of bread in the name of Christ. To whom the porter answered that they had no bread. But the abbot, finding there was a little bread, which was being kept for the carpenters, bade give one loaf to the stranger, who took it, and departed. So there was then but one loaf and a half left for the entire community, and the carpenters must have it, for they were toiling harder than the rest. But as the porter let the beggar out of the gate, he found there two men from the castle of Knaresborough, in charge of a wagon full of fine loaves: Eustace, nephew of Serlo de Burgh, had heard of their poverty, and had sent to relieve their wants. "Truly God was good and faithful in His promises, seeing that in return for one loaf of coarse flour He gave so many of fine meal."

II. The Resort to Clairvaux.

One looks on this picture of the first days of the Cistercians at Fountains with a vast and deep admiration. Here, indeed, were men who having put their hands to the plough were not minded to look back; here were men setting steadfast faces to the great Idea. It is not to Fountains as it became in later days that we turn with pride, but to the Fountains of the poor huts, the wooden chapel, the miserable pittance, the truly apostolic lives. Nevertheless, even apostles and saints must eat something, lest death come upon them before the appointed time. For two years the community had little to eat. Poverty lay heavy upon its members. They had no comfort, says Serlo, save the knowledge that the hand of the Lord cannot fail them that put their trust in Him. Now Abbot Richard was an eminently trusting man, but in the end even he fell on despair, for no help came. Perhaps he did not wait long enough; at any rate he at last grew so desperate

that he made the long journey to Clairvaux, to ask Bernard himself what was to be done. There seemed no hope of prospering at Fountains: would Bernard receive him and his brethren at Clairvaux? Then Bernard, full of compassion, consulting with his own monks, decided to give the Yorkshire community a refuge on one of the Clairvaux farms, and Abbot Richard returned northward to fetch his famishing brethren. But in his absence the help which was so necessary had come. Hugh, Dean of York, a man of noble birth, fell ill, and in his illness, Serlo tells us, God sent into his heart the good thought that for the health of his soul he should betake himself with all his goods to the Cistercians at Fountains. He had many goods. "The man was rich, not only in actual money and furniture, but in books of the Holy Scriptures, which by the guidance of God he had collected with much care and expense." So, on his recovery, to Fountains went Dean Hugh, carrying his money, his chairs and tables, beds and pots, and his library, all of which he placed at the disposal of his new brethren. They, seeing in this the gift of God, made prudent disposition of the acquired wealth. The first part they dedicated to the poor; the second to building church and cloister; the third to maintenance. And Abbot Richard came back, and the days of bitter poverty were over, and the house and church of Our Lady of the Springs began to rise in the hitherto desolate valley.

12. Byland.

As it was in the beginning with Fountains, so it was in the beginning with Byland. Its first settlers were men who wandered much before they found a resting-place; they were, indeed, bandied about from one scene to another as if the very earth itself had no wish that they should lodge on any part of it. Of their early doings, their wanderings, and their privations, a history was written by Philip, third Abbot of Byland (1196),

who gives as his authorities his predecessor, Abbot Roger, and certain aged monks of the community. This history was printed by Dodsworth and Dugdale in their *Monasticon*. Its writer begins by remarking that as, by the sin of our first parents, human memory has become so greatly obscured and clouded that earthly actions and events are soon forgotten, unless they are committed to writing, it seems well that he should set down for the benefit of his successors all that is known of the history of their house, as he himself got it from Master Roger, "our predecessor of pious memory," who, according to the list of the abbots of Byland in Mr. Baildon's *Monastic Notes* (Yorkshire Houses), was abbot for fifty-four years—1142 to 1196. Abbot Philip then proceeds to tell that in the year 1134 twelve monks, headed by a leader, Gerald, whom they elected abbot, set out from Furness Abbey and settled at Calder, in Cumberland. His story gives one the impression that they spent some time at Calder after the fashion of the first days at Fountains; they were, at any rate, only just beginning to build church and cloister, when, in 1137, an invasion of marauding Scots into that part drove them away, impoverished and homeless. In this distress they made for Furness, trusting in the charity of those they had left four years previously. But when they came to Furness, the abbot and monks of that place, "fearing that strife might follow," denied them entrance. From whom they turned away, greatly sorrowing and not knowing what to do; those who should have been friends being, so it seemed, no kinder than the enemies whose fierceness they had fled. Now it may have chanced that some one of them had heard of the kindness of Archbishop Thurstan to the seceders of York, and mentioned the matter at this juncture: to Thurstan they set off from the inhospitable Abbey of Furness, on foot, but accompanied by an ox-cart, wherein they carried their clothing and their little library.

13. The de Mowbray Benefactors.

Here there is a diversity of narrative, for Abbot Philip gives two stories. In one he says the monks actually went to Thurstan, who sent them to Roger de Mowbray. In the other he tells another tale, which seems to be the more accepted one. As the little company drew near to the town of Thirsk, having then walked some hundred and fifty miles over exceeding rough country, and being footsore and weary, they were met by the seneschal of the Lady Gundreda, mother of Roger de Mowbray, then a youth, and consequently in guardianship of the King (Stephen), as all young noblemen who had not come of age were in those days. The seneschal, moved by their story, led them to his mistress, who was so much more moved that out of her pious compassion she shed plentiful tears. After which she kept them to dinner, and being greatly edified by their demeanour and simplicity, she would not permit them to depart, but promised to find them, not only a place of abode, but means of subsistence. Now Lady Gundreda had an uncle, Robert de Alney, a Norman gentleman, who, having once been a Benedictine monk of Whitby, had left his monastery and settled himself as a hermit at Hode (Hood Grange), near the Hambleton Hills. To him Gundreda sent Gerald and his companions, and at Hode they settled for a time, and were maintained by their kind patron. It would appear that they were claimed by Furness while at Hode; thereupon Abbot Gerald journeyed to Savigny, and besought and obtained complete independence of Furness: no doubt he did full justice to his story of the treatment he and his had received there. This was in 1142. He died at York as he returned home, and Roger was elected abbot in his place. One of his first deeds was to persuade the Lady Gundreda that the situation of Hode was not favourable for their purposes. Certain relations, or dependents, of the Mowbrays had by this time joined the Order, and

had brought it a little money : Gundreda was, therefore, disposed to add to her favours, and she persuaded her son to give the new abbot another site. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, in the year 1143, Roger de Mowbray gave to Roger and his brethren the site of Byland and all its appurtenances.

14. Sites and Shiftings.

But this was not the Byland of which we of this day may see the ruins. It was Byland-on-the-Moor, now called Old Byland. Here the community built a cell—meaning a chapel and an abiding-place—and abode for five years. But the situation had disadvantages quite as great as those of Hode. It was in close proximity to Rievaulx. Perhaps we do not quite see what drawback there was in that. But the truth is that the bells of Rievaulx disturbed the monks of Byland, and the bells of Byland disturbed the monks of Rievaulx. "This," says Philip, "was unseemly, and could not in any way long be borne." So they migrated again—this time to a place called Stocking, which appears to have been somewhere adjacent to the present villages of High and Low Kilburn, at the foot of the southern extremity of the Hambleton Hills, and not far from Coxwold, afterwards to be famous by reason of its connexion with Laurence Sterne. Here they were still close to Rievaulx, but separated by a high hill : this site, too, was given them by Roger de Mowbray. They appear to have meditated a definite settlement at Stocking, for they built a church and cloister of stone. And it was during the time at Stocking that the famous dispute arose between the abbeys of Calder (which had been resettled after Gerald and his brethren fled from the Scots) and Furness as to the paternity of the Byland monks. The Abbot of Calder set up his claim in 1153 ; the Abbot of Furness put forward his claim a little later. But the brotherhood of Byland really belonged to the Order of Savigny, which had formally joined the Cis-

tercian Order in 1147, and the Abbot of Savigny claimed his own. Eventually the matter was referred to a tribunal of English monks, presided over by the Abbot of Rievaulx, and judgment being given in favour of Savigny, Byland became free of all claim from Furness and was formally constituted a Cistercian house. While this was going on it had outgrown its days of trial and poverty, and in 1177 it made yet one more removal—the last—to the site now familiar to us in the ruins of Byland Abbey. And here there was much spade-work to be done—the ground was a miserable swamp, covered with wood. But they cut down the wood and drained the land, after a clever fashion of their own, and began to build what was to become one of the finest churches in the country: there was to be no more wandering—"ubi, Domino annuente, fœliciter manebunt in æternum," says the chronicler.

15. Jervaulx.

The story of the founding of Jervaulx, the ruins of which are now, happily, well taken care of, is told in a Latin chronicle which was preserved at Byland, and was printed by Dodsworth in the *Monasticon*. Certain matters are not made clear in it, but it gives a fairly consecutive narrative of events previous to the final settlement of the Jervaulx brotherhood. In the time of King Stephen there came into the wild north-west of Yorkshire a certain man named Peter de Quinciacus, having much skill in medicine, and being accompanied by certain monks who, for some reason which does not appear, had left the Abbey of Savigny in Normandy, of which Peter also seems to have been a monk, or, perhaps, a lay-brother. Why they came to the Yorkshire dales is not explained, but being there they desired to establish a house of religion on Cistercian lines. Peter made application to Akarius Fitz-Bardolph, Lord of Ravensworth, a sub-feudatory of Alan, Earl of Richmond. Akarius gave him a piece of land at a place

named Fors, in the valley of the Ure, in that part now called Wensleydale. Like most of the gifts of the pious founder of those days, the benefaction was of doubtful quality. "The situation was unpromising," says Whitaker, "high in the valley, cold, and exposed to fogs, and, therefore, though not unfit for pasturage, ill-adapted to the ripening even of barley and oats, for wheat was then rarely cultivated even in the low districts north of the Trent." Nevertheless, Peter and his brethren made shift to live, and even to build, and they were assisted by the Earl of Richmond, who seems to have taken a pious interest in their doings, and by Roger de Mowbray, who gave them some land at Masham. The community, however, desired recognition as a definite monastic establishment, and about 1146–47, the Earl of Richmond being in Normandy, he sought out the Abbot of Savigny, and stated its case, at the same time formally handing over Fors to his paternal care. But Savigny looked on the far-off bantling with no favour: it had heard more than enough of the toils, troubles, embarrassments, and poverty of these new foundations in the Yorkshire solitudes, and when Peter wrote asking for help, its abbot rated him soundly for his doings, and, according to the chronicle, called him a fool. Clearly there was no assistance and no recognition of proper status to be got from Savigny.

16. Difficulties of Foundation.

But soon after this there was a general chapter of the Order at Savigny—it would seem to have been that at which the Savignian houses became merged in the Cistercian system—and Roger, Abbot of Byland, went to Normandy to take part in it. Him Peter entrusted with a letter, begging him also to intercede with the authorities on behalf of the community at Fors, which by this time had contrived to build a wooden chapel and some mud-walled huts, and was managing to live—miserably enough, no doubt. In the end the Abbot of

Savigny requested the Abbot of Quarr, in the Isle of Wight, to visit Fors and examine matters and prospects. To Fors the visitor came, accompanied by Matthew, a monk of Savigny, and the Abbot of Byland. Matthew, as an expert, advised that the estate was not sufficient for the support of a separate house, and suggested that it should be handed over to Savigny. But Peter and his brethren objected. Things were improving—they had improved since the appeal to Savigny. "Blessed be God!" said Peter, appealing to the visitors. "We now possess five carucates of land under the plough; we have forty cows, with their calves; sixteen mares, with their foals; five sows, with their litters; three hundred sheep; thirty hides in the tannery; wax and oil for two years; we hope, too, that we shall shortly raise a proper supply of ale, cheese, bread, and butter." The visitors appear to have acquiesced in this hopefulness, and Peter and his small knot of followers (only four are mentioned) made profession there and then. But it was not until St. Bernard himself intervened on its behalf that Jervaulx was formally constituted. This was done at Byland, where John of Kingston was elected first Abbot of Jervaulx, and dispatched to Wensleydale with nine monks. Even then there was sad trouble. The land at Fors was what Whitaker describes it; nothing would grow: Peter's cows, sows, and mares might multiply, but no corn made glad the land. The Byland monks sighed for their own place; some of them were for returning, and would have done so if they had not been afraid of reproaches. The pious benefactor again appeared on the scene—with more land. Alan, Earl of Richmond, was dead, but his son and successor, Conan, was favourably disposed to the community, and with the consent of Harveius, son of Akarius Fitz-Bardolph, also deceased, he gave the monks the more favourable site whereon the church and cloister, of which certain remains still exist, was duly built.

17. Salley.

According to the account given by Serlo, the aged monk, to Hugo, who set it down, there came to Fountains in the fifth year of its foundation, a nobleman named Ralph de Merlay, who was so touched by what he saw there that he forthwith built and endowed on his estate near Morpeth, in Northumberland, a monastery which was colonized from Fountains, and received the name of Newminster. "This," said Serlo, "was the first shoot which our vine put forth: this was the first swarm which went out from our hive. The holy seed sprouted in the soil, and being cast, as it were, in the lap of fertile earth, grew to a great plant, and from a few grains there sprang a plentiful harvest. This newly founded monastery rivalled her mother in fertility. She conceived and brought forth three daughters, Pipewell, Salley, and Roche." If the charters given by Dugdale (or Dodsworth, who did the work for which Dugdale usually gets the credit) are correct, William de Percy, the founder of the house at Salley, which was colonized by Abbot Benedict and his monks from Newminster in 1147—or, as some chroniclers say, in 1146—had built church and cloister before they came—"quam ego ipse construxi"; so the wording runs in two of them. However, even though they did find a roof over their heads when they settled in this wild and lonely stretch of the Ribble, under the shadow of the bleak Pennine Range, the Cistercians of Salley endured much poverty and hardship during the first years of their existence. As at Jervaulx, as at Barnoldswick, there was much rain, great severity of weather in winter, and land that was slow to produce good crops. Although the grant of William de Percy was of some extent, it cannot have yielded much in money or goods, and within forty years of the foundation the abbot and brethren were reduced to such straits that they petitioned the general chapter at Clairvaux to be permitted to dissolve the community. But at this stage, Matilda de Percy, Countess of Warwick,

daughter and heiress of the founder, came forward, and in company with her sister Agnes gave Salley the rights of the church at Tadcaster, the chapel at Hazlewood, certain charges on the church of Newton, and some land at Catton : Agnes added to this land and grazing rights at Litton. At a later date another member of the same family, Henry de Percy, gave the community the church and revenues of Gargrave, but from all one can learn of the early fortunes of Salley its days of poverty lasted for a long time, probably because it was far out of the world and much removed from such markets as then existed.

18. Kirkstall.

At Barnoldswick, near Salley, in an equally wild and lonely situation, began the fortunes of the community which was soon to be better housed at Kirkstall. The accounts of this foundation come from the same source—Serlo the monk, who in his day had been a Canon of York, and by his own confession a possessor of much gold and silver, which he handed over to the common fund on joining the brotherhood at Fountains. Serlo left two accounts—one is printed by Walbran in his *Memorials of Fountains*; the other by Clark in volume iv of the Thoresby Society's publications. They practically correspond, and they are valuable, because their author was himself a factor in the setting-up of Kirkstall, and one of the original company which went from Fountains to Barnoldswick. But there are certain omissions and inaccuracies in the old monk's story which Walbran corrects and supplies. As to the actual founding, the facts are clear. Henry de Lacy, Lord of Pontefract, owner of the great Lacy fee which stretched from Lincolnshire to Lancashire, taking in a wide belt of middle Yorkshire, being sick for many days, in the year 1146, made a vow that if God would grant him a safe recovery he would build a monastery of the Cistercian Order. He was duly restored to health, and he then

appears to have visited Fountains and conferred with its abbot about the proper paying of his solemn vow. A piece of land was selected at Barnoldswick, a wild, lonely place half-way between the Aire and the Ribble, and thither were dispatched certain monks from Fountains, Serlo amongst them, with one Alexander as their abbot. "The place of our habitation," says Serlo, "was first called Barnoldswick, but we changed the name and called it Mount St. Mary. We remained there for some years, suffering many hardships through cold and hunger, both owing to the inclemency of the weather and the continued rain, and because of the disturbed state of the kingdom our goods were constantly carried off by prowlers." But the good man omits here a certain episode in the history of Barnoldswick which, as Walbran presents it, reflects little credit on the Cistercians. There was in Barnoldswick when they went there an old parish church, around which, on Sundays, after Mass, the dales-folk were accustomed to gather, as was, and remained, the fashion of that part of the country. These weekly assemblies were an offence to the monks, and Abbot Alexander high-handedly not only pulled down the church in order to stop them, but succeeded in getting the Archbishop of York and the authorities at Rome to approve of his action. Walbran, and before him Whitaker, support this story with good evidence, but a modern writer in volume viii of the Thoresby Society's publications considers it improbable, or, at any rate, not altogether correct.

19. Hermits in Airedale.

According to Walbran, Serlo is again in error in telling of how the community came to leave Barnoldswick for Kirkstall. Because of the inclement situation, and the way in which it was robbed, says Serlo, the brotherhood became discontented with Barnoldswick, and by the advice of the founder "moved to another place." But the real facts seem to have been somewhat otherwise.

Abbot Alexander, having occasion to journey southward, chanced, in traversing the middle stretches of the Aire, to come across a curious company of hermits who were living under one Seleth in a pleasant situation. This Seleth had been led from far away in the south by a heavenly voice, which bade him journey into the north country until he found the valley called Airedale: there, at Kirkstall, he was to prepare a house for a community which should come. Alexander heard this story from Seleth's own lips—while his ears were attentive, his eyes were active. He contrasted the fertility of Airedale with the sterility of his corner of Craven; he saw wood in plenty, and water in abundance, and presently he rode forward to Henry de Lacy, and begged for the land on which Seleth and his fellow-hermits were living. The land, however, was sublet to William Peytvin; by the good offices of Henry de Lacy, Peytvin agreed to Alexander's proposals; Seleth and his company were got rid of, either by absorption into the Cistercian community or by being bought out, and Barnoldswick was quickly forsaken.

20. The First Abbot.

Leaving the excellence of the Airedale land and the richness of its wood and the abundance of its waters aside, how much more suitable in certain respects was the Kirkstall site than the Barnoldswick? Kirkstall, as we see it, lies in the midst of one of the most thickly populated districts in Yorkshire. But in the middle of the twelfth century that part of Airedale was a wilderness, wherein, as the late Professor Phillips says, "the deer, wild boar, and white bull were wandering in unfrequented woods, or wading in untainted waters, or roaming over boundless heaths." Leeds, a few miles down the valley, was a small, obscure settlement; Bradford, just over the hill, was no more than a mere hamlet, if, indeed, it existed at all; the great overgrown places of to-day, villages in rank, towns in size, were

possibly represented then by a woodman's hut or a swineherd's cot. So far as we know, the situation of Kirkstall was as lonely as those of the other Cistercian houses of Yorkshire when Abbot Alexander, his twelve monks, and his ten lay-brothers came there and began building. This was in May 1152, and Alexander remained abbot for thirty years longer, and did great things before his death. He was the real founder of the magnificent church and cloister which still stand in majestic ruin on the very edge of the great modern city. "Kirkstall Abbey is a monument," says Whitaker, "of the skill, the taste, and the perseverance of a single man"—its first abbot. And if Alexander was somewhat to blame in the matter of the priest and people at Barnoldswick, he was big-minded enough to make reparation to the folk of that district, for Walbran discovered from a charter in the York library that it was at his request that Archbishop Henry Murdac raised the chapels of Marton and Bracewell, near Barnoldswick, to the dignity of parish churches.

21. Roche.

Of the founding of Roche Abbey there are fewer particulars than in the case of any of the other Cistercian houses in Yorkshire. It stood in the extreme south of the county, just outside the edge of the great wood which until then had been called the Bruneswald, and was afterwards celebrated as Sherwood Forest, the refuge of Hereward and the last of the old English, the haunt of the perhaps mythical Robin Hood. Its exact site in the middle of the twelfth century must have been as far removed from men as any of its sister establishments. True, Sheffield was not far away on the west, and Tickhill was somewhat nearer on the east, but each was then a mere *vill*, Tickhill, perhaps, the larger of the two—it certainly exceeded Sheffield in population two hundred years later. All between Sheffield and Tickhill was at that time a wilderness, little, if at all changed from its

condition when the neighbouring Conisborough was the seat of a Saxon king. Through this solitude meandered several small streams; one of them, rising near the present village of Maltby, ran southward to join the little river Ryton at Blyth. The land on one side of the rivulet belonged to Richard Fitz-Turgis, also called Richard of Wickersley; on the other to Richard de Busli, Lord of Maltby, a descendant of the Roger de Busli who, after the Norman Conquest, came into possession of most of Earl Waltheof's Hallamshire estates and built a castle at Tickhill. These two Richards were the pious founders of Roche. According to the *Monasticon* they agreed to give land to the monks on each side of the stream on the understanding that the house should be built on whichever bank was considered most suitable, but that each donor should get as much credit as the other, he whose land was rejected being held as meritorious as he whose site was favoured. According to certain lists of Cistercian houses printed in the *Journal of the British Archæological Association*, xxxvi, Roche was founded in 1147: the foundation charters, oddly enough, bear no date. It was not known until the unearthing of the thirteenth-century chronicle of Hugo, the Kirkstall monk, from whence the community of Roche sprang. Hunter, in his *South Yorkshire*, professed himself uncertain as to whether it was colonized from Fountains, from Rievaulx, or from one of the great Continental houses. But Hugo's narrative tells us plainly that it was one of the three daughters of Newminster; granddaughter, therefore, of Fountains. Its first abbot was Durand, of the date of foundation; the second Dionisius, who succeeded in 1159; the third and fourth, judging by their surnames, were local men—Roger de Tickhill, 1171; and Hugh de Wadworth, 1179. As for the actual site, it is a narrow valley, of the type so dear to the followers of St. Bernard, shut in on one side by picturesque limestone crags—one of which, from a curious formation, seems to have become an object

of pilgrimage, and possibly gave a name to the house. In the opinion of expert archæologists, Roche, so far as the cloister was concerned, was completely built before the death of the second abbot, 1171; this may have been due to the fact that there were fine stone quarries close at hand: the church, of which part of the choir and the transepts still remain, is of a later date, and probably replaced an earlier and humbler structure.

22. Meaux.

Of the poverty, struggles, and embarrassments which beset the Yorkshire Cistercians in their early days, one learns more from the chronicles of the solitary Cistercian abbey of the East Riding than from those relating to the other seven. The monks of Meaux suffered sore vexations from money troubles for a very long period. Yet they had great advantages and privileges from the very beginning. In the midst of the flat lands of the upper stretches of Holderness there was a manor which had been given at the time of the Norman Conquest to John Meaux, one of the knights who had followed William from Normandy; about 1149–50 John Meaux's successors sold it to William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle, who already owned most of the land in that part of Yorkshire. The Earl was a renowned patron of religion: he was the founder of the Augustinian house at Thornton, the Cistercian house at Vaudey—both in Lincolnshire—and of a Cluniac abbey in France. Moreover, he was pious, and at this time had made a vow that he would go on pilgrimage to the Holy Places; but he was sore let, being, as his name implied, a man of exceeding weight, neither was he as young and active as he had been. A journey of some thousands of miles became gradually impossible, nevertheless his conscience afflicted him. But there was a certain monk of Fountains, one Adam, whom the Earl met at Vaudey, who had a suggestion to make on that point. Let the Earl discharge his vow by building another house of

religion, and let it be in Holderness, where as yet the Cistercians had no footing. True, a dispensation was necessary, but it could be got. Adam got it through the influence of Clairvaux. And armed with it he journeyed into Holderness, and having satisfied the good Earl, began to cast his eyes about him for a site.

23. The Site of Meaux.

The land was table-like in its flatness—here were none of these valleys so beloved of St. Bernard. But at Meaux there was what might with some considerable stretch of the imagination be called a hill—it was indeed then named St. Mary's Hill—and instead of being desolate and infertile it was rich in wood and pasture; there was also water. Adam came to this hill—then ensued one of those scenes which are so typical of that time, when the words of Holy Writ flew naturally to men's lips. The monk, reaching the summit of this lowly elevation, broke out into the words of the prophet: "The house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow into it!" The thing was done; there was no more to be said; it was the finger of Divine Providence. Here must the Earl make good his vow; here must church and cloister arise. Nevertheless, if the chroniclers say true, the Earl was somewhat discountenanced, for he had cherished very secular ideas about that particular place, intending to make a fine park there, and had already started enclosing it with a dike, the vestiges of which may be seen to this day. But he was a gentleman, so he put his own notions aside, and he and Adam began to discuss the prosaic features of present and future. Very soon they had built a cloister, which, in plain truth, was of mud walls, and another building—perhaps of better material—the lower story of which was a dorter, the upper a chapel; and three days after Christmas in the year

1150, the usual number of thirteen monks arrived from Fountains and set up the Abbey of Meaux. Needless to say, the first abbot was our friend Adam.

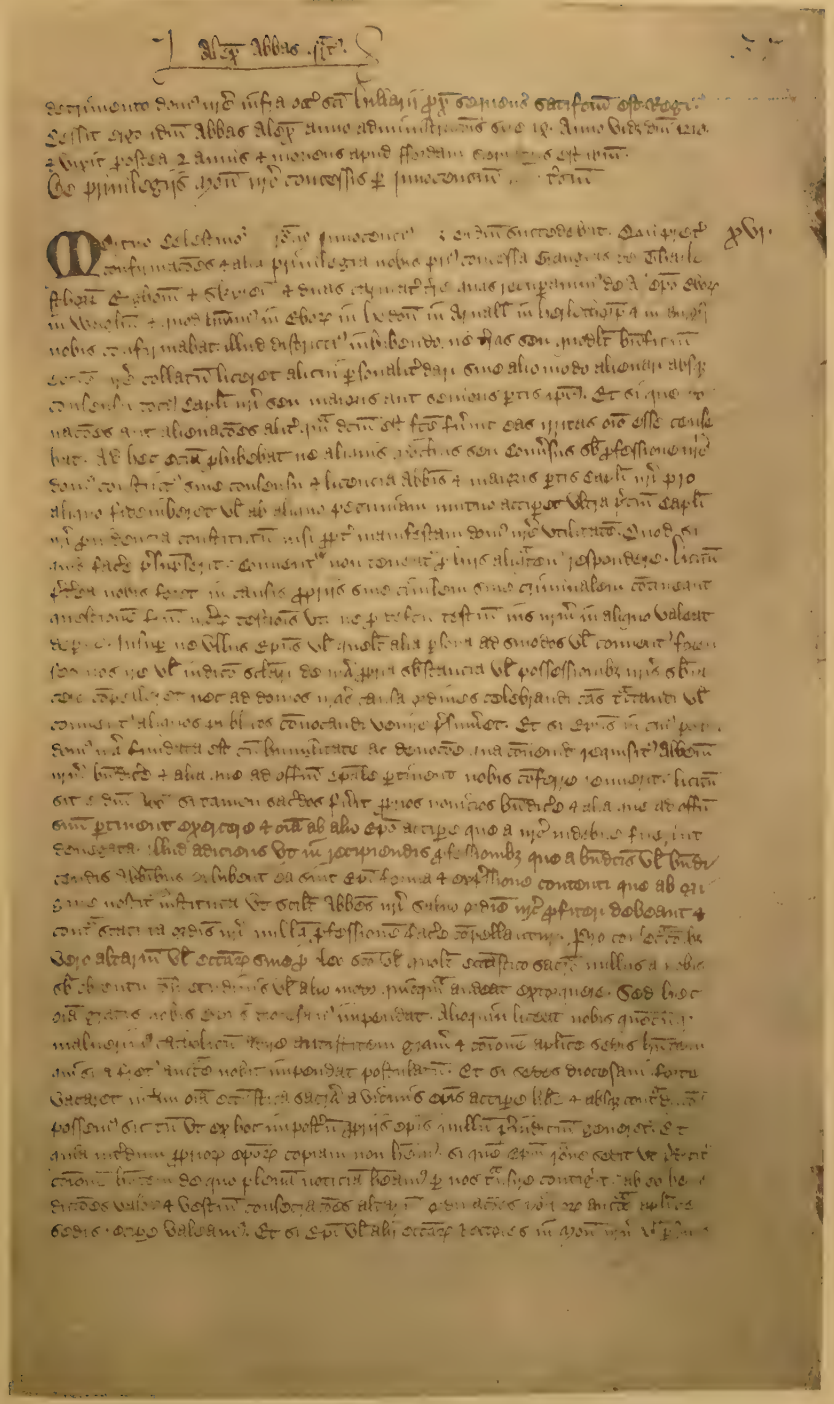
24. Early Troubles.

Meaux, perhaps, from a purely materialistic point of view, had the fairest immediate surroundings of any of the Yorkshire Cistercian houses at the time of establishment. While all the others were in dreary thorn-strewn wilds, it stood amidst cultivated land, six carucates of which it owned under the Earl's generous endowment. But all outside that enclosed space was solitary enough in those days. True, there was Beverley not far away, and Beverley was already an ancient, grey town, rich in memories of St. John and of King Æthelstan: there were also some small religious houses in the neighbourhood. But most of that part of Holderness was then morass and swamp; Hull was scarcely in existence; Hedon, the principal port of the Humber, was many miles away across country; there were no markets. Now markets were strictly necessary to the Cistercians if they were going to prosper, for they depended much on the sale of their produce. We need scarcely go as far as Fuller, who said of the followers of Stephen Harding and Bernard that they were better farmers than monks, but it is quite certain that if they had not grown much produce, and known how to turn it into money, they would never have become as wealthy as they did. They appear to have begun farming here at Meaux as soon as they settled within their first mud-walled cloister—"the abbot and the monks," says the chronicler of Meaux, Abbot Thomas Burton, who ruled from 1396 to 1399, but about whose proper election there was much dispute, "began to seek their daily food by the works of their hands, eating their bread by the sweat of their face, and levelling the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts by their blood. The country folk flocked to them, some to help, others for conversion;

for the dull people wondered to see the hooded race performing at some times the Divine Office and at others occupied with rural works. But the monks progressed daily in necessaries and building, and every day their number was increased"; yet in spite of their efforts they were hard put to it to exist even on bare rations cut down to the minimum. Two causes contributed to this. The pious founder gave the community too much land to begin with, and Abbot Adam gathered too many monks and lay-brothers about him. His abbacy was by no means a success. It became increasingly difficult to feed and clothe the inmates. So sorely were they in need of garments at one time that the abbot distributed his own poor raiment amongst those who were worse off, and went about with but a single wrapping on him. Eventually the community was obliged to disperse—in part: some going to one house of the Order, some to another. As for the zealous abbot, he retired to the Gilbertine house at Watton, not far away, and lived the life of an anchoret, under the Priory Church, in a cell, or anchorage, of his own devising, seeing no man, and doubtless meditating on the inscrutabilities of Divine Providence. However, he came out from his retreat at the expiration of seven years, and went back to Meaux as a monk, and there, many years later, he died.

25. The Meaux Chronicles.

Of all the eight Cistercian houses of Yorkshire, Meaux is most lost to us of this time. Beyond a few stones, let into the walls of the neighbouring farmsteads and cottages, nothing is left: the work of destruction in the sixteenth century was here carried out to an unusual degree of completeness. Accordingly we know nothing of the architecture of Meaux. Nor do we know much of the cloister life of its first inmates. But in the chronicles of Abbot Thomas Burton we find plenty of information about another side of the life up to the end of the fourteenth century. And if the plain truth be



A PAGE FROM THE CHRONICLES OF MEAUX
(From the original at the British Museum)

told, there is little, if anything, in these chronicles to show that those concerned in them had any great interest in the matter which primarily brought the community together. There is nothing about religious life—it is all a setting forth of the worldly affairs of the brotherhood—sheep, mills, land, lawsuits about possession; one would think that things had so degenerated as to have already reached that stage of which Prior Richard so strenuously complained to Abbot Godfrey at York. The chronicles and chartularies of the other houses are, unfortunately, of a similar nature, but at a later stage—in the case of Meaux, from almost the very beginning, worldly affairs seem to have occupied the attention of the abbot and monks in a degree which would have made St. Bernard lift his hands, not in supplication, but in fiery reproof.

26. Debt.

We have already seen that Adam, first abbot, however zealous he may have been as a monk, was not overgifted as a business man. Probably no building of stone was done in his day. His successor, Abbot Philip, began a stone church and dorter; the third abbot, Thomas, pulled these down and replaced them, bringing stone from near Brantingham, by water, along the Humber and up the Hull. During the next hundred years much building in stone was done; after about 1250 the ornamental work began to be taken in hand: by the end of the fourteenth century, judging by the accounts in the chronicles, house and church were not only fully equipped, but decorated much more than was in accordance with the original Cistercian constitutions. Meanwhile the community had experienced much financial trouble. Certainly it was not always their own fault that the monks of Meaux were embarrassed. During the time of the third abbot, Thomas, in the reign of King John, they were called upon for contributions of a heavy sort, and had to sell their wool, their plate, and their treasure to such an extent that they were ruined.

For some time they were dispersed : it was only through the coming of a new and rich member, William Rowley, Vicar of Cottingham, that they were able to reassemble. But much of their poverty arose from an evident over-desire to accumulate wealth, for they were always engaged in lawsuits, and the expenses were great. They had many lawsuits before the house was fifty years old. Debts began to accumulate ; they went on growing ; Meaux was never free of debt for the greater part of its history ; it came to possess considerable store of property and chattels, having in 1280 as many as 11,000 sheep and 1000 head of cattle, but it was always short of money. When the eighth abbot, Michael, lay dying, the monks asked him three questions : Should they go to law with St. Mary's of York about the fishing rights in Hornsea Mere ? Should they transfer a grange to another site ? Should they cut down a wood to build a new ship ? He answered "No" to each question ; they cast his advice aside in each case. By 1270 the house was in debt to the extent of £3700 ; this was during the abbacy of Robert de Skyren. His next few successors reduced this considerably, but fifty years later there was still a debt of £500, and there was not much farm stock to show. The lawsuits continued ; the community must have wasted a fortune in lawsuits. Under Abbot William, or Walter, de Dringhou (Dringhouses), the debt fell to £80, but when Abbot Thomas Burton, the chronicler, resigned, and retired to the more peaceful atmosphere of Fountains, it had gone up again to £400. And when all due consideration has been paid to the facts of the greediness of the Crown, and the exaction of Papal fees, and the difficulty of converting goods into money, one cannot get away from the other fact that in the idea of its first founders, men of holy life like Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian Order was not set up to busy itself with gold, and silver, and the perishable things of this world.

27. The First Poverty.

Never was the example of the saints of Citeaux and Clairvaux so well followed, never was the Cistercian ideal so worthily made evident before men, as in the first days of poverty wherein at Fountains and at Jervaulx, at Barnoldswick and at Byland, the early settlers kept the Rule, roofless and hungry. "The world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world," said Prior Richard, when he stood before the lax Abbot of York and pleaded for reform; he proved his words when he and his brethren gathered, empty of belly, starved, and cold, under the elm in Skeldale, to sing the Divine Office. Enthusiasm, piety, charity went hand in hand in the first days wherein there was often no bread and the only coverlet was the silent heaven. And it was in these days that the first colonies went forth—from Rievaulx to Warden, in Bedford; to Revesby, in Lincoln; to Rufford, in Nottingham; to Melrose, in Scotland; from Fountains to Newminster, and to Kirkstead, and to Kirkstall, and to Vaudey, and to Meaux, and to Louth; even to Lyse, far off across the North Sea in Norway. As these daughters sprang from parent houses alive with enthusiasm, so they, too, endowed their children with a like burning zeal. Whatever their successors became, the first English Cistercians, like the first followers of St. Francis of Assisi, were not concerned with the things of the world. Prior Richard and his twelve brethren, following Archbishop Thurstan to Ripon that first Christmas, were indeed literal beggars. Did it ever pass through the mind of that saintly first Abbot of Fountains, as he stood shivering under his elm in the bitter winter of 1132, that where he then looked on his hungry yet steadfast brethren there was to rise the grandest and richest cloister in Yorkshire? There is but one answer—No!

CHAPTER III

SETTLEMENT

1. The Thirteenth Century.

One of the greatest of Yorkshiremen, who was also the greatest of English historians, the late Bishop Stubbs, said of the thirteenth century that it was the Golden Age of English Churchmanship. Another historian whose labours lay in a different field, but who was eminently trustworthy and illuminative, the late Dr. Jessopp, supplemented this by affirming that it was also the Golden Age of English monachism. "We know much more about the monasteries and their inner life during this period than at any other time," he writes. "The materials ready to our hand are very voluminous, and the evidence accessible to the inquirer is very various. I do not believe that any man of common fairness and candour who should give some years to the careful study of those materials and that evidence could rise from his examination with any other impression than that, as a body, the monks of the thirteenth century were better than their age." This is a sound judgment. When the thirteenth century dawned the monastic communities had, for the most part, got over the troubles, privations, and embarrassments of the twelfth. They had built their cloisters and their churches, or were carrying the architectural work to a triumphal conclusion. Their position in the land was assured. Gifts and benefactions had made it certain that they would never lack bread. They were settled. And if the early enthusiasm had lost some of its fire,

it had simmered down to a steadily preserved warmth which permeated the whole body and was manifest everywhere. For at least a hundred years from the time of Magna Charta no serious reproach could be brought against the monastic Orders, which shared in its concessions in common with all other Englishmen.

2. Magna Charta.

The thirteenth century was truly a Golden Age of English Churchmanship, and for many reasons. Great things had gone before it. The memory of Anselm was still kept green: Beket was perhaps more powerful in death than in life. But the end of the twelfth century had brought about a fall, a decline only possible under such a ruler as King John. Church and State alike had been cast into the mire: we Englishmen can never be sufficiently grateful to the men whose strong hands lifted them out and set them on a firm foundation. We have been apt to confuse things—schoolboys, even of this age, carry away the idea that John gave the charter of liberty to the nation. But Magna Charta possesses its real significance in the fact that the leading Churchman of the age was the first man to sign it when the King's unwilling fingers had signed under compulsion; the writing which Englishmen should gaze on with reverence is not John's, but Stephen Langton's. In the first article the keynote of the Church's liberty is struck, once and for all. "Let the Church of England be free, and have her rights intact, and her liberties uninjured." If we pride ourselves on our freedom, if we value our liberty, it is to a thirteenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury, champion of the rights of State as well as of Church, that we must turn with gratitude for the first bestowal. Not from a weak and dastardly King, but from a strong and great Churchman, came the liberties of the nation.

3. Great Churchmen.

The thirteenth century was rich in great Churchmen: rich, too, in their infinite variety. Dean Stephens, in his *History of the English Church*, 1066–1272, divides them into classes. There was the medieval type of saint—St. Hugh of Lincoln (though he, to be sure, died as the century was born, and should therefore be credited to its predecessor); St. Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury; St. Richard of Wyche, Bishop of Chichester, three great prelates—"profuse in almsgiving, indifferent to worldly honour, fearless in reproving wickedness and wrongdoing in high places, happiest in seclusion, study, and devotion." There was the statesman-ecclesiastic, like Stephen Langton and Ralph Neville—"able, upright, patriotic men . . . leaders of the nation in difficult critical times." There was the expert financier in Peter de Roches, Bishop of Winchester, who, "a hard, unscrupulous man" in many ways, saw to the good condition of his diocese, and founded many houses of religion. Perhaps there was no corresponding figure to that of Hugh de Puiset, who in the twelfth century was Bishop of Durham, Earl of Northumberland, and of a degree of personal ability and magnificence rare in any age. "Of commanding stature, handsome countenance, eloquent speech, attractive manner, whatever he did was on a grand scale. He was a great builder, a great hunter, a great shipowner, living in sumptuous style . . . as a politician, ambitious, intriguing, and cautious." Yorkshiremen of his period knew something of him because of his connexion with Howden, where the Prince-Bishops of Durham had a residence. But the thirteenth century produced a far greater ecclesiastic than Hugh de Puiset in Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who cannot be ranged with men like his predecessor, Hugh of Avalon, nor with Stephen Langton, nor, indeed, with any other type of Churchman. "He stands out by himself an almost unique character, a kind of intel-

lectual giant, a scholar of extraordinary range of knowledge, being almost equally distinguished in theology, philosophy, mathematics, and physics. He was a wise and vigorous ruler of his diocese, a reformer of abuses in the Church, who feared the wrath neither of king nor pope, and a patriotic citizen who supplied Simon de Montfort and the leaders of reform in the State with sound principles of action. No English Churchman of his time was so strenuous and zealous in upholding the rights of the English Church as this great Bishop of Lincoln, whose last utterances were spoken in protest against the enormities and exactions of the Roman Curia."

4. The Friars.

It was in the thirteenth century that the Friars came. There was need of them. We have the testimony of Grosseteste himself that the indolence and negligence of the secular clergy gave rise to innumerable evils and filled him with despair. When the Papal Legate, Otto, Cardinal Bishop of Palestrina, held his famous Council in London in December 1237, no fewer than twenty-four causes of complaint were tabulated. Mr. A. L. Smith, in his Ford Lecture on *Church and State in the Middle Ages*, says the state of things revealed bears out the picture drawn in the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Giraldus Cambrensis—which work, it should be remembered, deals only with the condition of things amongst the secular clergy, who, as Mr. Smith says, were as yet far behind the monastic—showing a clergy slack, ignorant, backward, unspiritual, illiterate, gamblers, brawlers. Golden as the age was in respect of certain fine features at the top, it was of undeniable dross in some of its lower strata. If there was no complaint to be made of the monasteries, it was yet the fact that the monastic Orders were not in touch with the people. Educating and civilizing centres though they were, they were far out of the world; their influence only extended to those

within their confined areas. Perhaps there was no great need for improvement in the rural districts—the country parson appears to have been of a better type than his fellow of the town. But in the towns—now growing—there was dire need of mission work. A great class of poor, unfriended folk had come into being—sickness and disease ran riot amongst them. Their bodily welfare was as much neglected as their spiritual needs were unprovided for. To these people the coming of the Friars, Dominican and Franciscan, and especially of the Franciscan, was as the arrival of a food-ship to a starving city. Whatever the Friars degenerated into in after years, let no man ever forget what and who they were at their first coming. "Bareheaded, barefooted, clad in raiment of the coarsest stuff, depending for their daily food on the alms or hospitality of the charitable, they brought words of Christian hope and consolation to the sin-laden and sorrow-stricken, they tended the sick and dying, they washed the sores of the homeless, outcast, excommunicated leper." Reaching England, the Dominicans in 1219, the Franciscans in 1224, both Orders had settled in various places in Yorkshire by the middle of the century, at Hull and at York, at Pontefract and at Beverley, at Richmond and at Scarborough. And had one lived in those days and sought in one of those medieval towns for the Franciscan Friary, it would have been found in the very heart of the poorest and dirtiest and most neglected quarter of the town.

5. Yorkshire Church Life.

In spite of the condition of the secular clergy as revealed by Giraldus and at the Council of 1237, Church life and matters in Yorkshire during the thirteenth century were improved and revivified to a wondrous extent. The century witnessed the lives and labours of two great Archbishops of York—Walter Gray and Walter Giffard. It saw the building of many of the magnificent churches of the county. York Minster was slowly rising

into grandeur under men like Gray himself; no English cathedral owes more to its chief pastors than York. The county was already becoming famous for its architectural splendours—for Beverley and Ripon, Halifax and Rotherham, Hemingborough and Tickhill, Hedon and Patrington, Wakefield and Howden. As the great Minster of York rose within Bootham Bar, so, too, rose the new and splendid Abbey of St. Mary's, without the walls. All over the county the people were restoring the old parish churches, building new ones, ornamenting, decorating; parish vying with parish, guild with guild—it was an age of pious emulation. The mere stone-and-mortar evidences of religion began to be seen on all hands. The town bridge had its chapel; chantries were built at the corners of the markets; the wayside shrine, the cross by the highway, were never far to seek. Here and there, in the midst of what would then be considered a crowded population, rose the towers of a great monastic house like the Benedictine abbey of Selby, or the Carthusian monastery of Hull, or the Cluniac priory of St. John of Pontefract. And in the wildnesses of the dales, far away as yet from even the nearest town, Rievaulx and Fountains, Jervaulx and Kirkstall, Roche and Salley, Byland and Meaux were no longer humble settlements of mud walls, wooden chapels, and lath-and-plaster makeshift, but fair and stately homes of ordered religion, set in the midst of cultivated land and growing woods.

6. The Yorkshire Cistercians.

The first Cistercians were all gone by this, and others had succeeded them. Many of the first had been foreigners, men from Clairvaux, or Pontigny, or Savigny, who had come to the wild north country, lived out their lives in its solitudes, and been laid to rest in quiet graves. But the new men were English. Who were they, of what class? We may say that it matters not of what class, since all men are equal in religion. But

there is a significance in the question, if we would know what make of men these monks of that period were. In endeavouring to answer it satisfactorily we cannot do better than turn once more to Dr. Jessopp, who declares that the impression left upon his own mind, after a careful examination of the subject, is " that the thirteenth-century monk, as a rule, was drawn from the gentry class, as distinguished from the aristocracy on the one hand, or the artisans on the other. In fact, *mutatis mutandis*, that the representatives of the monks of the thirteenth century were the Fellows of Colleges of the nineteenth before the recent alteration of University and College Statutes came into force. An ignorant monk was certainly a rarity, an absolutely unlettered or uneducated one was an impossibility, and an abbot or prior who could not talk and write Latin with facility, who could not preach with tolerable fluency on occasion, and hold his own as a debater and man of business, would have found himself sooner or later in a very ridiculous and very uncomfortable position from which he might be glad to escape by resignation."

7. Yorkshire Origins.

So, on the testimony of a learned scholar, we may safely believe that the new inmates of the eight Cistercian houses of Yorkshire were most of them, or, at any rate, many of them, Yorkshiremen, drawn from that gentry class of which Dr. Jessopp speaks—a class which for many a hundred years has always given its sons in considerable numbers to the Church and the learned professions. But, as a matter of fact, we know that many of them were Yorkshiremen ; there is no need, after all, to resort to imagination or to discuss probabilities. We have only to turn to the lists of members of the various communities. In the chartularies and coucher books of the abbeys there are countless names of the monks : appended to the Christian name or the religious name is the surname, which is so often merely

the name of the place its owner sprang from. Let us look at the lists of the abbots of the Yorkshire houses any time from the end of the twelfth century onwards. Byland has Adam of Husthwaite, Walter of Dishforth, Robert of Helmsley; Fountains—William of Allerton, Henry of Otley, Walter of Coxwold; Jervaulx—John of Newby, Peter of Snape, John of Brompton; Kirkstall—William of Leeds, John of Topcliffe, John of Bardsey; Meaux—Richard of Thornton, Roger of Driffield, William of Scarborough; Roche—Adam of Giggleswick, John of Aston, William of Tickhill; Salley—Thomas of Driffield, John of Etton, William of Ingleton. The roll of the thirty-six abbots of Rievaulx is not prolific in these place-names, but its abbots had such names as Burton, Spencer, Bromley, Elmsley—all well known to Yorkshire. As for the family names of monks, one has only to consult deeds and charters to know where the inmates of the Cistercian houses sprang from any time between 1200 and 1539. They came, as Dr. Jessopp says, largely from the gentry class of the county.

8. Objects and Officers.

Being there, then, settled down in their dearly loved valleys, their cloisters built, their churches finished, what was their object? Idleness, says the scoffer: idleness, superstition; poverty their lot, maybe, at first; riches and luxury, certainly, and perhaps worse things, later on. Oddly enough, Thomas Carlyle, anything but a lover of monks, as monks, and a great hater of all shams, tells us in a certain passage in *Past and Present*, precisely what the object was: "Imperfect as we may be, we are here, with our litanies, shaven crowns, vows of poverty, to testify incessantly and indisputably to every heart, *That this Earthly Life and its riches and possessions, and good and evil hap, are not intrinsically a reality at all, but are a shadow of realities, eternal, infinite; that this Time-World, as an air-image, fearfully emblematic, plays and flickers in the grand still mirror of Eternity;*

and man's little Life has Duties that are great, that are alone great, and go up to Heaven, and down to Hell. This, with our poor litanies, we testify, and struggle to testify." But in order to testify, even with no more than singing of poor litanies, there must be order and system amongst communities of men assembled for such purpose, and while the Cistercian idea was, as Carlyle, in his own way, expresses it, a supernatural one, the Cistercian mind provided for due earthly regulation in an eminently businesslike fashion. Now that these Yorkshire houses are fairly settled and established, it is time we looked into their arrangements, inspected their life—we can perform that task in no better way than by reviewing the duties and responsibilities of the chief officers of a Cistercian abbey—always bearing in mind that however near we seem to stand to them, there is in reality a gap of seven hundred years between us of this twentieth century and the Fountains or Kirkstall of the thirteenth.

9. The Abbot.

The abbot, as his name implies, is the father of the monastic family. The whole system is based on the implication of implicit obedience to his paternal authority. Even as our Lord was to His disciples, so the abbot is to be to those placed under his rule—master. By his subjects he is elected—there are three methods: by vote; by compromise; by acclamation. In the first, each monk votes; the votes are counted by scrutiny. In the second, by agreement; a certain number of the inmates—the number may be one only—is chosen to make appointment. In the third, the recipient of this highest honour is elected by general opinion. Once elected, the new abbot is led in procession to the church, where his election is duly proclaimed and *Te Deum* sung solemnly. Then he goes to his lodging to await ecclesiastical examination as to fitness, which is duly followed by confirmation and installation. This, of course, is a

great ceremony. Barefoot, he presents himself at the church door. The whole community meets him. He is led to the high altar. There, at its foot, he prostrates himself. Once more *Te Deum* is sung: at its conclusion he is led to his abbatial seat, the proper instruments of election and confirmation are read, and the brotherhood charged to render their new head all canonical obedience. One by one the members approach and receive from him the kiss of peace: that done, standing at the high altar, he pronounces a solemn blessing. Now he is abbot, and the house has a head once more. All honour and respect are to be shown to him. All stand in chapter or frater until he has seated himself; whomsoever he passes by must stand and bow. He himself, being what he is, is to preserve dignity while he remembers courtesy. Certain peculiarities appertain to his position. At Office his place is farthest from the altar, the others being between him and it; at Mass his place is nearest, so that he may make the oblations and give the blessings. If, in any of the functions, he makes a mistake, and, following the monastic rule, stoops to lay his hand on the ground in penance, all present rise and bow. His privilege is to read the Gospel; to give the blessings whenever he is present; to bless the book of the Gospels, and the incense, and to put the incense in the thurible for the officiating priest. When his name chances to be read in chapter, all heads are inclined: when he says Mass the altar has two lights instead of one. In the Cistercian days of simplicity he sleeps in the dorter with the rest; if the bell has to be rung for some communal duty, he either rings it himself, or stands by the ringer. He alone of all the house may ask for a special dish at dinner; sometimes he sends such a dish to a brother whom he thinks is in need of it; the brother must rise and bow his thanks. He entertains guests; to such entertainments he may bid any of the brethren. If he is away for more than three days, the brethren receive him with kisses on his return; if he is absent

for some time they sing *Te Deum* in the church as soon as he gets back. He himself has rules to bear in mind —he must give help, he must instruct, he must stimulate, he must cheer ; the sick must be his especial care. And in all things he must remember, day in and day out, that he himself is nothing, and that the honour paid in his person is to his office and to Christ, reverenced in him.

10. The Prior.

The prior is, as it were, the foreman of the monastic workshop. The elder members of the community have a good deal to do with his selection, but his definite appointment rests with the abbot. He comes next to the abbot in everything : the honour paid to him is only less in degree than that rendered to his superior. In chapter and frater he is received standing ; nevertheless, he is to be humble, kindly, an example, " first among the first, last among the last." He has much to do. He is the disciplinarian, the mainstay. One monastic rule bids the prior remember that as the abbot is father of the family, so the prior is its mother. But there is to be nothing of the old woman about him—he is essentially a business man. Moreover, he must have his eyes everywhere ; another rule says, " the peace of the house depends upon him." He has certain duties of a police-like nature. Before the night office, it is his task to take a lantern, look into the dorter to see that no man has overslept himself, to go round cloister and chapels and to make sure that no brethren are nodding in dark corners, and that all is ready for the services. When the community has retired for the night, after compline, he must take his lantern once more and go round the house : he must lock all the doors and carry the keys with him to the dorter. There he must wait by his bed until all the others are safely between their coverings, after which he may himself lie down. Truly, as one writer has already observed, the prior

must possess " the patience of holy Job and the devotion of David."

11. The Sub-prior.

He has, however, an assistant. The sub-prior is appointed by the abbot on the prior's nomination. He has no very particular rank, nor any very important duties, of himself. He is, in short, a sort of convenient stop-gap : if abbot and prior happen to be away, at the same time, he becomes presiding authority. Nevertheless, he is at all times to keep his eyes open as regards the order and discipline of the house, and he has considerable power in giving permission to do this or refusing to do that, even when the superiors are at home : he is, in short, the second lieutenant of the company. And three things are particularly required of him—he must be abundant in sympathy, overflowing in love, and remarkable for his piety. In spite of the fact that abbot and prior are also patterns, the sub-prior is specially charged to set before all the example of His Lord.

12. The Cantor.

We begin to see now why the Cistercians call themselves the soldiers of Christ. There is a great deal of military system amongst them. Every man has his particular post, and special duties attach to it. The abbot is captain of the company ; the prior his lieutenant ; the sub-prior the second lieutenant. Now come the non-commissioned officers. First of all is the cantor. He is appointed by the abbot, advised, of course, by his helpers. The cantor must have special qualifications, for he has at least three highly important things to see to. He must look after the singing, the library, and the archives : moreover, he must be an expert ecclesiologist. Usually he is a priest, and one of proved character. He settles all the church services. He has to be particularly careful that they are properly performed ; for this reason he spends much time in

teaching the younger monks all about the traditional niceties of pronunciation in singing and reading: nay, it is part of his duty to attend the abbot himself on occasion, lest the great man should make mistakes. In fact, the cantor is about the hardest-worked man in the house. Whenever there is a procession—and there are many processions—he has to walk up and down between the brethren, seeing that they sing in tune and time. He has to train the novices. And he is strictly forbidden either to box their ears or pull their hair: nobody may do that but their own master. Nevertheless, human nature is such that he doubtless occasionally yields to sore temptation. As librarian, he has to take charge of and preserve all the books; to lend them out; every Lent he reads out in chapter the names of those folk who have presented books to the house; there is a highly commendable rule—would it were in use in these days, when authors are so little regarded!—that the names of the writers should be commemorated as worthy of remembrance and gratitude. All the writings of the community are in his charge, whether on wax tablets or on parchment; he superintends the scribes, gives them material, collects their work. He also keeps the roll of the dead, and he is one of the three custodians of the common seal. He is to be regular, modest, reverent, and in choir to "sing with such sweetness, recollection, and devotion that all the brethren, both old and young, may find in his behaviour and demeanour a living pattern." A very busy man indeed, this, and one of whom much is expected; nevertheless, he gets little indulgence, being only allowed to stay out of choir for a rest when his services can really be dispensed with. And on Saturdays, like everybody else, he must wash his feet in the cloister.

13. The Sacrist.

The sacrist, like the cantor, has more than one duty to perform. The entire church fabric is in his care—

plate, vestments, reliquaries, everything. Upon him is laid, in particular, one primary duty—the observance of scrupulous cleanliness. He has to wash many things himself—the altar linen, the corporals, even the floor of the choir. When he makes the breads for Holy Communion he and his helpers must be vested in white, and must say prayers and psalms during the making. Once a week all the sacramental vessels must be thoroughly cleansed: he is to do this with his own hands if he is a priest; if he is not a priest, he must get the services of one, and see that the task is properly carried out. In his charge, too, is the cemetery. There must be no weeds; the edges of the walks must be trim; the grass must be shorn; no animal must enter. He also has care of the bells; and if the community possesses a clock, no hand but his must touch it. He is also the light-provider of the house; all the candles, the wax, the tallow, are in his charge; he has to light up the church for the night offices; he provides light for the frater. It is also his duty to see that all lights are extinguished in church and cloister. One of his minor duties is to obtain from the cellarer the salt which is blessed each Sunday for the holy water; when it has been blessed, he must place a little of it in every salt-cellar used in the frater. Under him, his duties being so many, he has certain assistants: with two of them he always sleeps in the church itself or in some place close at hand.

14. The Cellarer.

Abstemious as the Cistercians are, the cellarer is a highly important official as being chief of the commissariat. He not only has to look to the needs of to-day, but to those of to-morrow; to see that corn is stored in the granaries and flour at the mill; his is the duty of buying in for the community; once a week he and the prior meet and consult as to the needs of the house. He is much away at fairs and markets, and

is therefore excused a good deal of attendance in choir; nevertheless, he must not neglect to say his office. He superintends the cooks and the serving of the food; he sees to the fuel, he buys in wood, glass, iron; it is in his province to take care about due repairs. Not the least onerous of his duties is in going round the granges on the abbey lands, giving an eye to the labours performed there; he is a man of flocks and herds. He has two principal assistants—one keeps an eye on the cellar, seeing that the beer is properly barrelled and the cellar kept scrupulously clean: this man has many serious regulations to keep in mind as to the preservation of the ale in the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Another is in charge of the bread—a highly important post in a community in which bread is indeed the staff of life; he sees to the milling of the grain and the baking of the loaves. He, too, is constantly going round the granges and farms; it is necessary to see that the stores of grain are kept up and properly housed, since a shortage of supply would mean more inconvenience than can well be conceived. It is his task, too, to see to the lodging and entertainment of all folk who visit the house on business connected with the agricultural life of the community.

15. The Refectorarian.

The brother who is in charge of the frater is, as it were, the head waiter of the establishment. He, too, is partly excused from the choir offices, and every morning he is free to leave the church as soon as the Gospel has been sung at High Mass so that he may see that everything is in due order in the frater for the dinner which immediately follows. His duties are onerous. He is provided with a certain yearly sum: out of this he furnishes tables, seats, linen, crockery, and appointments. He must see that the floor is spread with rushes or straw; his is the hand that provides flowers and sweet-smelling herbs for the tables; he must be careful

about proper ventilation. He sees to the due placing of the loaves, each covered by its napkin ; he distributes the spoons ; he takes care that the salt is dry and the cups set in their proper places. He is strictly enjoined to count the spoons and the cups every day, and he must be meticulously careful about their cleanliness. He is to have hot and cold water and clean towels ready for the washing of hands before dinner ; he is also to supply candlesticks when light is necessary for meals. And while he is to be a man of strong bodily health, he is also to be "a true religious . . . loving all the brethren without favour."

16. The Kitchener.

But far more important is the kitchener. Abbot and prior consult about his appointment ; the appointment is announced in chapter. In his individuality, he is to be a man of marked piety and virtue : just, patient, gentle, kindly, of good words and courteous manners ; he must be neither niggardly nor extravagant, but keep a happy mean in all that pertains to his office. It is an onerous one. He has to estimate what food he will require during the week ; to see that it is provided : to keep an account of it ; he must render his accounts to the higher authorities once a week. He is responsible for all that goes on in the kitchen, even for crockery broken by the cooks : if the platters are not clean, the blame falls on him. In two particulars he must be very careful—one, to take care that the brethren are never kept waiting for dinner ; the other, that the food prepared for those in the infirmary is such as sick men require. There are many rules laid down for him. He is to take care never to leave his keys lying about, and he is not to have too much faith in the cooks and those under him, but to keep a sharp eye on their doings. Being a very busy man he, too, is excused from choir at times, and, if he is a priest, he may say Mass while his brethren are saying the office. His first duty of the day is to

visit the sick brothers, not merely to ask after their appetites, but to give them a little cheer. And he is to be a man of piety, remembering the Lord Who said, "He who ministers to Me, let him follow Me."

17. The Infirmarer.

Grave and meritorious, if well performed, is the work of the infirmarer. He must be gentle and of a good temper; compassionate, kindly of heart, ever willing to show sympathy to those in his charge. As soon as one of the brethren falls sick, he must lead him to the infirmary and presently carry thither the sick man's bed, his plate, his spoon, and his cup, subsequently informing the kitchener of the removal, so that the patient's food may be provided. If he is a priest, he says Mass for his patients every morning; if he is not, he must get a priest to do so. If the sick are able, he says the office with them in the infirmary; he can borrow books for their use from the library, but he must be sure to return them every night before the book-cases are locked up. He always sleeps in the infirmary whether he has patients in charge or not, for sickness may come at any moment. He is to see that everything is scrupulously clean, to keep his floors covered with fresh straw, and to have in his cupboard a stock of medicines, especially ginger and cinnamon, both in great repute. And it is within his province to superintend that curious practice of blood-letting, regarded as so necessary at this age. Four times a year, amongst the Cistercians—namely, at or about Christmas, in February, in April, and in September—the brethren, in parties of four or six, are relieved of a certain amount of blood. The infirmarer has a fire lighted for these patients: for them, when the blood-letting has been performed, by opening a vein in the arm, and they have been duly bandaged, discipline is somewhat relaxed, so much so, indeed, that the occasion is regarded as quite a holiday. The patients are free of choir duty and of

all work: they have nothing to do but to rest and read; more food is allowed; a certain indulgence is granted in conversation. Nevertheless, if the patient feels well enough, he may go into choir, but instead of standing he is to sit, and he is to go out before the rest, lest his bandages should be disturbed by any one pushing against him.

18. The Almoner.

Like many of the other officers of the house, the almoner finds himself charged with more duties than one. He is not necessarily in priest's orders, though it is better that he should be, so that with his administration of charity he may mingle spiritual counsel and admonition. But his primary duty is to give—with proper care, discretion, and discrimination. If he is to live up to the Rule, he must possess a heart burning with charity and a boundless pity: the orphan must learn to regard him as a very father; the needy as a sure helper; he must have words of comfort for the sick, of support for the helpless. Where people have come down in the world, he is to respect their delicacy of feeling, and give their relief to them in private. He is to be kind to all in his administration: not even the persistent mendicant, however importunate he may be, is to ruffle his temper, for even he comes in the name of Christ. It is not merely money that he distributes. All the old clothes of the community fall into his hands: he is to do what he can with them, so that they may be repaired and furbished up for the use of the poor: he is to provide plenty of warm hose to give away in winter. Also to his charge fall all the remnants of food, which, duly collected after every meal, are subsequently distributed to the poor. But he has still more duties. He it is who receives the notices of deaths from other houses and entertains those who bring them; it is his province, too, to send out similar notices from his own house. He has a duty towards those of his community

who are becoming infirm; when the great Rogation processions take place he must furnish walking-sticks of boxwood to the aged. And he is concerned with sticks in another and a different fashion: he has certain youthful members in his charge in the almonry, and if they do not attend to their books and pens, he is to lay his stick freely upon their shoulders, remembering that whoso spares the rod spoils the child.

19. The Novice-master.

From the days in which St. Benedict framed his famous *Regula*, there had always been an ideal set up before the holder of every office in a monastic community. Very often—as men are, after all, but human—it was difficult to live up to the ideal: nevertheless, it was set up. Just as the almoner was bidden to remember that Our Lord came to him in the person of every beggar, so the master of novices is required to be an expert in the winning of souls. Amongst all the officers of the house he perhaps has the most delicate task to discharge: it is his province to seek for the signs of true calling to the monastic life. The rules for the admission and training of the novice are strict. As a postulant, seeking entry into the community, he first enters the guest-house, wherein he remains several days, duly observed. Admitted to chapter, he makes three formal requests to be admitted as a novice: if his request is granted he is at once handed over to the master of novices, clothed in the monk's habit, and immediately instructed in certain rules, manners, and customs. This stage is much like that in which a recruit finds himself on enlistment into the army. He and his fellows are separated from the rest of the community; one side of the cloister is specially assigned to them; there they learn, read, and study, always under the eye of the master. Three times during his year of probation, the novice renews his formal request in chapter: at the end, after a final and more solemn

petition from him, the report of the novice-master is considered, and if it be a favourable one, the candidate is solemnly professed, and receives the kiss of fraternity from the entire community. And what he will be in the future depends much on the lessons and examples set him by the master in whose charge he has been during his recruit stage, for as the twig is bent so will the tree incline.

20. The Vestiarius.

Though his work is not of a spiritual nature, the vestiarius, or chamberlain, is a highly important officer. It is his province to superintend all that pertains to the clothing, the laundry, and the repairing; he has also to see to shaving, washing, and the provision of boots. He has to provide the brethren with tunics, scapulars, hoods, boots, socks, drawers, and shirts; to see that the underclothing is regularly washed, and that no article is lost in the wash; to be careful about mending; to hand over cast-off garments to the almoner. He has to buy cloth from the merchants; sometimes they bring their goods to him at the abbey; sometimes he goes to the fairs whereat cloth-merchants congregate: it is his duty, too, to buy needles, thread, wax, scissors, and to superintend the work of the monastic tailors. He is responsible, also, for the linen and towels required in the lavatory and for the baths. And ascetic as the Cistercians are, the bathing is to be done in some degree of comfort: there must be a plenitude of hot water and warm, dry towels; moreover, there must be provided sweet hay, to be strewn round the tubs for the bathers to step out upon when they emerge. The vestiarius also makes the arrangements for the periodic shavings: the *Liber Usuum* only mentions seven shaving days, but there seem to have been special shavings on the eves of the greater festivals, when it was seemly that the *coronæ* or tonsures should be in due order.

21. The Guest-master.

Finally, as regards the principal officers of the house, we come to the guest-master, who, by the time the Order has become permanently settled, is a personage of very considerable importance. From the thirteenth century onward, the abbey is the general inn of the wayfarers, from the noble with his retinue to the pilgrim with his badge and staff. Its use as a house of call varies according to its location: Rievaulx, for instance, set amidst its wild solitude, is not so likely to have such demands made upon it as are made on Meaux, which is but two miles from a much-used high road. Nevertheless, all the houses receive many guests, of all classes, in the course of a year, and the guest-master is a busy man, quite as busy as the landlord of a roadside inn in the old coaching days: so far as one can make out from the ancient documents, guests, in greater or smaller numbers, were always being entertained. Accordingly, he must be a man who always has his wits about him, who is gifted with tact, discretion, and politeness, who is neither garrulous nor taciturn, but knows how to converse readily and wisely with those whom he entertains. He is to make sure that the guest-house is always ready for the reception of visitors; that lights, fire, warm water, clean linen, rushes for the floors, and writing materials are provided, and that the cellarer is notified as to food. He is to receive guests as he would receive Our Lord, assuring them of welcome, putting them at their ease, personally assuring himself that everything is done for their comfort. He is also to explain the rules of the house, to arrange for the attendance at church if the guest so desires, and if the guest be a person of consequence, to acquaint the abbot with his presence. He is to speed his parting as he is to welcome his coming, taking care that nothing is left behind in the guest-chambers, and that the God-speed of the brotherhood goes with the visitor.

22. Guests.

It must be very evident that the importance of the medieval house of religion as a place of rest and refreshment was far greater than we of this age can well conceive. Before we can arrive at even a faint idea of that importance we must get some notion of two matters —the state of the roads and the condition of society. Good as the roads had been in England during the time of the Roman occupation, they were suffered to fall into a wretched state after the Romans had gone, and they continued to deteriorate until, by the thirteenth century, they had become the worst in Europe. Moreover, they were frequented by robbers: a curious law of 1285 enacted that all wood, whether of bush or tree, should be cut down for two hundred feet on either side of all highways to prevent the lurking therein of thieves, footpads, and the like. Consequently those who were obliged to travel—and we may take it that very few people travelled for mere pleasure—banded themselves, if possible, into companies for safety and mutual protection. The great folk, of course, travelled with bands of armed retainers; the lesser, we may be sure, took care to have arms with them, unless, indeed, they were of so little consequence in the way of possessing money and goods that robbers would turn from them with contempt. But the throng that drew up to a religious house for hospitality as night came on would be no inconsiderable one, made up of all sorts and conditions, and no one was turned away. Therefore the guest-house and the guest-master were highly important factors in the monastic life as it touched outside matters, for it was not until much nearer the end of the Middle Age that inns were found outside the towns, and the coming and going of guests was certainly a daily feature of life in any religious house.

23. The Abbeys as News-centres.

It naturally followed from this that the monasteries became great centres for the distribution of news. There were, of course, no newspapers, no newsletters—centuries were to elapse before either were known in England. Letters were carried between sender and recipient, it is true, but we do not know exactly how: there are no records of any organized or public carrying before the sixteenth century; we know, as regards the monastic Orders, that letters were conveyed from one house to another by *breviators*—lay-brothers told off for the purpose. But the general news of the country was conveyed by word of mouth, and here the religious houses, entertaining guests constantly, as they did, formed important centres for its distribution. Even in those of the strictest rule, like the Cistercian houses, news spread and was redistributed. The man of rank, pausing with his retinue at the abbey for the night, was entertained by the abbot; he brought the news of the court, of foreign affairs, of Parliament; he doubtless added the current gossip of high society. The merchant from the town gave the guest-master all the latest news of trade, of local happenings, of plagues, battles, nine-days' wonders. The poorer sort entertained the porter with scraps from their particular budget; one way or another, if the countryside wanted news about the great, mysterious world outside the parish boundaries it got it at the abbey gates. So, in a later period, country-folk got the news of Trafalgar and of Waterloo, not so much from newspapers as from talk at the inn-door while the fresh relay of horses was being put to the York or Bristol coach.

24. Curious Cistercian Customs.

We may deduce from this that the obligation of silence, so strictly insisted upon in the first days of the Order, had become somewhat—perhaps considerably—

relaxed by the time the English settlement was fully effected. Similar obligations, laid down under the rule of Stephen Harding and of Bernard of Clairvaux, were certainly falling into disuse before the Yorkshire houses had been in existence fifty years. But in the beginnings the Order was ringed about much too abundantly with rules and regulations which lacked elasticity; being too rigid they were ruthlessly snapped, and never mended again. A brief consideration of the statutes reveals the existence of many curious customs. Abbots and monks of the Cistercian Order were not permitted to administer the sacrament of baptism: hence there were (originally, at any rate, for relaxation of the rule in favour of abbots appears to have been made before the fourteenth century) no fonts in the Cistercian churches. The brethren were forbidden to keep dogs, bears, apes, or any animals exciting levity; this rule, too, fell into disuse later on, for many of the Yorkshire houses possessed sporting dogs. Lazy *conversi* were condemned to eat coarse bread: on occasion disobedient monks might be put in chains. The *conversi* were not allowed to wash each other's heads: neither *conversi* nor *monachi* were permitted to drink after compline. No dyed garments were allowed: the real reason of the adoption of the white habit was not because of the vision of Alberic, referred to in Newman's life of Harding, but because dyed wool was considered an unnecessary superfluity. Gloves were forbidden to be worn, save in certain excepted cases. It was forbidden to keep hawks; this, again, was a statute which fell into neglect. There were penalties for losing one's verse in the office; the loss of three verses (or absence during three verses) was regarded as an offence of great seriousness. Communities were not allowed to keep peacocks—the reason for this seems on the surface: the peacock is a bird of gay and worldly aspect, full of pride; moreover, he has a loud and shrill note. Neither were players, actors, mountebanks, strollers to be let in; this rule, too, was not kept in

later days. There are many regulations as to horses, saddles, bridles, and stirrups : the horse was evidently not ranked with either peacock or ape as a forbidden thing. One notable regulation shows that it was regarded quite possible that members might be so wicked and misguided as to practise sortilege : there is provision for the punishment of such offenders, with threats of bread and water, and worse. Fowler, in his notes to the Statutes, mentions an example of punishment for sortilege (the offence was one common enough nowadays —crystal-gazing) recorded in Archbishop George Neville's York Register (folio 69) : one William Byg, *alias* Lech, of Wombwell, being sentenced to do penance by wearing a paper scroll about his head inscribed *Ecce sortilegus*, and on his breast and back other papers inscribed *Invocatur Spirituum* and *Sortilegus*. It may have been some naughtily inclined monk or lay-brother of this disposition—for there was a sad tendency to study and practise magic in those days—who got himself incarcerated in one of the three cells at Fountains, and on the plastered wall scratched the words *Vale Libertas*.

25. Influence on Surroundings.

Reckoning the due settlement of the Cistercians in their eight Yorkshire houses to have been effected by the beginning of the thirteenth century one may safely believe that by fifty years later they were exerting a considerable influence on the population around them. That population was gradually increasing. The land, laid waste by William the Conqueror in 1070, had once more been brought under cultivation. The market-towns, small as they were in comparison to what they were to become, were growing in importance. Scarcely one of the eight abbeys stood so far away from men in 1250 as they had all stood a hundred years before. Ripon had grown as Fountains had grown ; Leeds was being transformed on the very edge of the grounds of Kirkstall ; Jervaulx was next door to Middleham and

Leyburn and Masham; Meaux was close to Beverley from the beginning; within a few miles of Roche lay Doncaster in one direction, Tickhill in another, Sheffield in a third, Rotherham in a fourth; Helmsley and its castle lay between Byland and Rievaulx; Salley, perhaps the most isolated of the eight, was still not so far away from Skipton, growing into the capital of Craven under the walls of the Romille stronghold. The castle of the feudal baron was now everywhere in close proximity to the cloister of the medieval monk: the smaller folk were much more inclined to turn to monk than to baron. There can be little doubt that during the first hundred and fifty years of their history in Yorkshire the Cistercians were highly popular amongst the people. There were many reasons for their popularity. Their piety was as yet unspoiled by accretions of wealth. They were still comparatively poor. There was no slackness in their religious life—the Rule was kept. They set examples in religion, also they set example in a matter closely affecting the well-being of the folk around them, for they were pioneers of good farming, and toiled hard and well on their own land When they began—as they soon did—to let that land to tenants, they proved themselves exceedingly good landlords, teaching new methods, introducing new products, finding seed, supervising and instructing on all sides. The monk was always a better landlord than the baron, for the baron was constantly absent; the monk was rarely from home. Moreover, as Thorold Rogers has pointed out, he was the advocate of genuine dealing towards the peasantry; the poor man of that day turned with trust to the Churchman where he shrank from the soldier and the lawyer. Here then were two good reasons for the welcome given to the Cistercians—they were conscientious in discharging their own special duties, benevolent in their dealings with others. But there were more reasons for their popularity. As villages and hamlets grew up in the neigh-

bourhood of the abbeys, their folk came under the care of the community—food, clothing, even money, scarce as it was, was distributed with no niggardly hand: such medical skill as the brotherhood possessed was given freely to the sick. As guest-house for the traveller, the abbey filled a want which nothing else could have supplied at that time: one is not sure from what one can gather from medieval chronicles that even the person of distinction would have been welcomed at the baron's drawbridge, but he was sure of courtesy at the monk's wicket-gate. And so long as the Cistercians retained their early simplicity, observed their Rule, eschewed riches, worked their land, gave alms to the poor, relief to the sick, hospitality to the wayfarer, so long could no man find occasion to point the finger of suspicion in their direction. Once more it must be repeated that the Golden Age of the followers of Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux in England lay in those first years, when prayer and labour, asceticism and charity, went hand in hand; those years in which the Order had sufficiency and not superfluity; competence, but not wealth.

CHAPTER IV

WEALTH

1. The Original Idea.

Before entering on a consideration of the means by which vast possessions in the form of land, houses, and money came into the hands of the Cistercians, it will be well to arrive at some conclusion as to the original ideas of the men who founded the Order. So far as we can gather, those of Stephen Harding were of a purely religious nature, going little beyond the reform of those laxities and abuses which had crept into the observance of the Rule of St. Benedict. But when we come to Bernard of Clairvaux we perceive a different or, rather, an additional object. Bernard was statesman as well as saint; pioneer in worldly matters as well as prophet in religious. In Bernard's purpose, Clairvaux was not only to be a home of true religion, but an example in the world of labour. Its monks were not only to show men how to increase in spirituality, but to point to methods of industry and settled order which, as his wisdom told him, would tend to a mighty improvement in civilization. Clairvaux, without doubt, became a great humanizing influence. "Civilization," says Mr. Frederic Harrison, "moral and material, radiated from it through that dark tract as from a centre of light and warmth." "I no more doubt," remarks the late Canon Atkinson, quoting this sentence in his Introduction to the Rievaulx Chartularies, "that the monks of Clairvaux, invited by Walter Espec to found and build up the House of Rievalles, and directed by the saintly

Bernard, were so invited and directed with these self-same ends and objects and purposes in view as Bernard's own at Clairvaux, than I doubt the existence of the wonderful proof of their energy, wisdom, systematized purpose, and performance which appeals to our higher and better judgment in the stately ruin of their great work, varied, as it was, in the fulfilment of one part only of their magnificent intention and aim." Therefore, in taking the first benefactions of land and money offered to them on settlement in new quarters the early Cistercians had a worthy object—how worthily it was carried out is shown by Mrs. Green, one of the most thoroughly reliable of modern historians, in the following extract from her *Henry the Second*: "In half a century sixty-four religious houses were built in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire alone. Monastery and priory . . . towered above the wretched mud-hovels in which the whole of the population below the class of barons crowded. . . . We may gain some faint idea of the amazing stir and industry which the founding of these monasteries implied, by following in our modern farms and pasture-lands the traces which may even now be seen of the toil of these great preachers of labour. The whole water-supply of a countryside for miles round was gathered up by vast drainage-works; stagnant pools were transformed into running waters closed in by embankments, which still serve as ditches to the modern farmer; swamps were reclaimed that are only now preserved for cultivation by maintaining the dikes and channels first cut by medieval monks; mills rose on the banks of the newly created streams; roads were made by which the corn of the surrounding villages might be carried to the central mill, and the produce of the land brought to the central storehouse. The new settlers showed a measureless cunning and industry in reclaiming soil hitherto worthless." Here, surely, is a proof that Bernard's idea was that his followers should not only be reformers in religion, but pioneers in industry

FOUNTAINS

and civilization: every Cistercian house was to be, in its neighbourhood, a centre from whence example, spiritual and material, should flow.

2. Departure from it.

But was it ever his intention that a Cistercian house should add land to land, house to house, wood to wood, until, as in the case of Fountains, an abbot could ride thirty miles without setting his horse's hoofs off the communal property? If we can gather an accurate idea of Bernard from the available material, the answer to that question is surely in the negative. Now it is undeniable that the Cistercians, once settled in Yorkshire, accumulated property at an amazingly rapid rate, and in equally amazing quantity. If Richard and his monks fled St. Mary's at York with nothing but their habits, they possessed a great deal within a very short time. If the community at Barnoldswick carried little to Kirkstall, it had not been long established there before numerous valuable properties in the neighbourhood had fallen into its hands. So it befell in the cases of all the other six houses of the Order in Yorkshire. Whereas the original idea of Stephen Harding and of Bernard of Clairvaux, seems to have been that a brotherhood should possess sufficient property to maintain it in accordance with its simple requirements, their successors of the next generation eagerly grasped at all that was offered, began to scheme for more, and commenced that long series of legal processes which was ultimately to contribute to the downfall of the Order. The wealth of the Cistercians began to flow in upon them almost at once. The original grants of lands were liberally supplemented by other grants; rich men made offerings; the guest, hospitably treated, rendered a return; bequests were made; the corrody system was introduced, by which, in return for an annuity, an often very considerable sum of money was paid into the communal treasury; the popularity of the Order

inclined men to give to it, here a little, there a great deal. While this wealth flowed in, all went well—to outward appearance. Church and cloister were built, not always in accordance with the plain and simple ideas of the early days; the machinery moved on well-oiled springs. But even then the harm was being done, for the communities were being set up on a scale of grandeur and magnificence which necessitated the continual addition of wealth, until an abbot's first duty became not so much a spiritual as an essentially worldly one. The abbey had been transformed from a religious retreat into a gigantic business establishment: where the first Abbot of Fountains looked out from beneath his elm-tree shelter on a wilderness, his successors of two hundred years later looked on moor and pasture crowded with sheep and cattle, on upland and lowland rich in grain, on lead-mine and stone-quarry, on game-preserve and fishery: his domain extended from the escarpments of Pen-y-gent to the heart of the county. Not for this, one feels, did Prior Richard boldly face Abbot Godfrey at York and denounce those who added acre to acre and roof to roof, "going to law one with another." Whatever he and his first little band felt content with, the "modest culture of the ground and the use of cattle" did not satisfy his successors, the mere list of whose possessions came in time to fill many a crowded sheet of the chartularies.

3. Documents.

It is to the chartularies of the various houses that we must turn if we wish to gain some idea, more or less accurate, of the wealth—especially in landed property—which within so comparatively short a time passed into the hands of the Cistercians in Yorkshire. From them, and from the household books, and from such statements of account as have been preserved, we get some notion of those financial arrangements which must have necessitated much expenditure of time and care on the part

of every abbot and his principal officers. But there are other sources of information as to monastic possessions which throw significant sidelights on the history of the communities—the rolls or records of the various courts of law, such as the Curia Regis Rolls, the Coram Rege Rolls, and the De Banco Rolls. In these, monastic property is constantly the cause of action: one learns from them that the monks were almost ceaselessly engaged in litigation; sometimes as complainants, sometimes as defendants: there are still other instances in the Yorkshire Assize Rolls, and in the Conventual Leases of Yorkshire Monasteries. More information still can be gained from the Feet of Fines of various reigns. Altogether, the details and particulars are multitudinous; one can do no more in an elementary outline of the whole subject than give an epitome of the monastic possessions referred to in these ancient documents.

4. Chartulary of Rievaulx.

From the Chartulary of Rievaulx, edited by the late Canon Atkinson for the Surtees Society, by whom it was printed in 1887, we learn that the original grant of Walter Espec to the colony of settlers from Clairvaux was a very small one—four carucates of land at Grif and five at Tilston. In those first days, "apart from any active sympathy and co-operation they may have met with on the part of the founder," says Canon Atkinson, "they seem to have been thrown very much on their own resources, so far as help or countenance from any other external quarter is involved." It was not until some years later that a neighbour, Odo de Boltby, gave them a grant of land at Heskett—not a very productive gift, for the value, four hundred years later, was only £4 13*s*. 4*d*. a year. It was not till some years after this that Walter Espec added his additional grant of Bilsdale, nor was that at first a great addition to their resources, though it eventually became so. But from the time of Walter Espec's charter lands began to

be given in increased quantity—yet it could not have been out of any income derived from these lands that Rievaulx, the earliest portion of which certainly dates back to 1145, the year of the Bilsdale grant and of some other benefactions, was built. Canon Atkinson was inclined to believe that Walter Espec helped more towards the building of Rievaulx than has ever been credited to him. "Who can tell," he asks, "where the means came from, or how it was that such a mighty zeal, as is attested by the great block of work, which we see for ourselves, was actually carried out, was inspired? Who were the helpers, and in what form or forms was the help given? . . . I cannot but feel convinced . . . that the 'Founder' [Espec] now became a founder indeed. . . . Considering the extent of work that was completed at the early period we are contemplating, and the character of the same, it seems utterly impossible, allowing for the slenderness of the as yet existing means of the convent, to account for the fact that it was effected, on any other ground save some such as that now suggested. The effort, and the results alike, were so obviously beyond the means and the unassisted power of the convent, and the assistant must have been one alike munificent and abounding in wealth." That Walter Espec was abounding in wealth is well established; that he was munificent, we know: it seems certain, therefore, that his grants of land to Rievaulx were supplemented handsomely by other gifts of money and material, in the hope that before his time came his eyes might look on "an house exceedingly magnifical unto the Lord."

5. Donors.

For a time matters went smoothly with Rievaulx, but at some period between the death of Walter Espec and the final completion of the abbey, the community experienced sore trouble in being forcibly deprived of much of what had been given. Between 1145 and 1160

many grants had been made, notably by Odo de Ness, Gilbert de Gant, Bishop William of Durham, and Bishop Hugh of Durham. In 1154 came the valuable grant of Roger de Mowbray, conferring eight carucates of land at Welburn and four at Houston. Upon this followed a succession of gifts from families of note, such as those of Lascelles, Bulmer, Malbis, Tunstal, Engelram, Fitz-Ivo, Cumin, and Alverstain. Other donors about this time, or somewhat earlier, were Robert and William de Stuteville, and Everard de Ros, Walter Espec's nephew. Now certain of these men, and notably the Stutevilles and Mowbrays, are charged, in a Rescript of Pope Alexander III, addressed to the Bishop of Exeter, the Abbot of St. Mary's at York, and the Dean of York, with having plundered the Rievaulx community of the lands they had already given to it, and of other land given by their predecessors. The usual pains and penalties—excommunication, interdict, deprivation of Christian burial—are threatened, and that they were efficacious is made evident by the fact that the lands specified were afterwards in possession of Rievaulx, and remained so to the time of its suppression.

6. Property of Rievaulx.

But this trouble over, the grants of land to Rievaulx continued in ever-increasing quantity: it is impossible to specify them here in entirety. The various charters, deeds, confirmations, quit-claims, printed by Canon Atkinson run into the hundreds—the mere enumeration of names of people and places is formidable in itself. In one extract from a chartulary of Rievaulx preserved among the Cotton MSS., beginning "Istæ sunt possessiones Rievallenses perennes quæ sic collatæ sunt nobis," there are forty entries of grants from the year in which Walter Espec gave Grif and Tilston to that wherein "Willelmus de Etun dedit nobis ix acras prati et unam perticatam in Torp juxta Eboracum." In the "Carta Henrici Regis Senioris de omnibus possessionibus

et libertatibus Rywallencibus" there are one hundred and eighty-one entries relating to the monastic property. In the Patent Rolls (6 Edward III, pt. 2, m. 23) there is a document which is of extraordinary interest to any one attempting to get an idea of what lands and possessions had accrued to Rievaulx up to the year 1332. In this, a confirmation by Edward III of all grants and concessions by various benefactors to the convent, are set forth the names and particulars of the various vills, tofts, thorpes, woods, lands, messuages, and other properties then held. In the Surtees reprint this document is compressed by the omission of all the mere formal phrases of customary use, the omissions being indicated by dotted spaces; even then it occupies thirty closely packed and printed pages. In the same reprint Canon Atkinson included the "Ministers' Accounts" (30–31 Henry VIII, No. 162) so that they might be collated with the document just referred to; they fill twenty-four similarly printed pages. There is practically little difference between the volume of property of Rievaulx in 1332 and that of 1538—a proof that the chief period of benefactions to the religious houses may be fixed as having existed between the middle of the twelfth and the beginning of the fourteenth century.

7. Its Location.

Where was situate most of the great mass of landed property which had come into the possession of Rievaulx? Canon Atkinson, in a note to Walter Espec's foundation charter, points out the impossibility of precise identification of any but a limited portion of the places named in the verbal delineation of the boundaries referred to therein, and the same remark applies, in degree, to most of the subsequent charters, documents, and lists. The Grif of the first charter was a farm in the neighbourhood of Helmsley: the Tilston is identified by Canon Atkinson with the present Stiltons. The spelling of place-names in these early records is some-

times extremely puzzling: nevertheless, it is possible to get an idea of where a good deal of the monastic land lay, though certain names referred to seem to have been long lost to use. The "Ministers' Accounts" perhaps afford the best means of identifying the various locations with present-day places: in the entries there contained one recognizes many names in the neighbourhood of Rievaulx and Helmsley—Newton, Oswaldkirk, Bilsdale, Scawton, Welburn, and the like. But some of the possessions referred to were far off—Keld, Angram, Middleton-in-Teesdale, in the north-west corner of the county; Redcar, Scarborough, and Thornaby, on the east coast. Many names of old Yorkshire families occur in these entries—de Lacy, de Busli, de Bulmer, de Brus, Mallaby, de Ros, de Vescy; the names of eminent Churchmen like Archbishop Thurstan, Archbishop Roger, and various Bishops of Durham, are frequent. The items of the "Ministers' Accounts" show how the different holdings varied in value. The original grant of Walter Espec, called in these accounts "Gryffe Graunge" and its appurtenances was then—1538—reckoned as being worth £10 11*s.* 10*d.*; a grange at Murton-cum-East Harlersay is set down at £13 11*s.* 6*d.*; a tenement at Thornton produces 3*s.*; four bovates of land, one toft, three crofts, and one cottage at Stittenham are worth £1 10*s.* 8*d.*; various properties at Welburn bring in £39 18*s.* And at the end of some of the items are appended the significant words *summa nulla*.

8. Fountains.

Having its beginnings in absolute poverty, Fountains became the richest of all the Cistercian abbeys of Yorkshire. Its first wealth came to it with the arrival of the two clerics, Hugh, Dean of York, and Serlo, Canon of York, who, soon after the famine which nearly brought the new foundation to an end, joined the community, and devoted all their many goods, books, furniture, money, to its use. In the account written by Hugo,

the monk of Kirkstall, who derived his information from Serlo, the story is told of how the next benefactions came to Fountains. "A certain knight of that neighbourhood, Robert de Sartis, took to himself to wife a certain woman named Raganilda, and with her certain lands which fell to her by right of inheritance. These two were both inspired by the counsel of God, and, by a solemn gift in accordance with the wish and grant of both, made over to Fountains the village which was called Herleshow, with the adjacent land and the forest called Warsall. They were buried at Fountains in the sepulchre of the just, and their memory is held blessed among us." Then a young man named Serlo de Pembroke, who had been of the King's household, fell ill, and sending for the Abbot of Fountains, made over to him the village of Cayton, three miles to the south of the abbey. He died at Fountains, and "had his sepulchre among the saints." Soon after that the abbot acquired Aldburgh, near Masham, and, says the chronicler, "from that day and henceforth God blessed our valleys with the blessings of heaven above and blessings of the deep that lieth under. He multiplied the number of the brethren and added to their possessions, spreading out His vine . . . till in a little while it became a great vine."

9. Hugo's Chronicle.

The chronicle of Hugo tells much of the early fortunes of Fountains, and of its gradual progress towards prosperity and wealth, not without certain periods of tribulation intervening. He tells of the founding of Newminster, of Kirkstead, and of Louth; of the letters written by Bernard of Clairvaux to cheer and strengthen the brethren; of the rule of Abbot Henry Murdac (subsequently Archbishop of York, 1147–53), one of a wealthy Yorkshire family, who, originally one of Bernard's own disciples, had been chosen by him to be first Abbot of Vauclair, and of how in his days the monastery grew

within and without, and had the three granges of Cowton, Kilnsey, and Marton added to it. He goes on to tell of the founding of more daughter-houses, Woburn in Bedfordshire, Lysa in Norway, Kirkstall in Airedale, Vaudry in Lincolnshire, Meaux in Holderness. Then he comes to a sad episode in the history of Fountains—the dissension of Churchmen in the archdiocese of York, one faction forming under Archbishop William, another under Abbot Henry ; and this led to the burning of the cloister erected with such pains, and to the partial destruction of the church. But the abbot and brethren were spared, and " they repaired the fallen places, rebuilt the ruins, and, as it is written, the walls fell down, but with hewn stones it was built again. They were helped by the faithful of the neighbourhood : a new building rose up, far more gorgeous than its predecessor." But there was a worse matter than this to follow. During the time of Abbot Richard III, a mutiny broke out amongst the brethren and caused great scandal : " the sons rose against their father, sheep against their shepherd " ; the abbot had to retire for a time. But the presumptuous ones suddenly repented of their sin, and being severely chastised, were forgiven and restored : after which, says the chronicler, " no such thing was ventured on at Fountains," which continued, under the rule of succeeding abbots, to move forward to prosperity.

10. The Fountains Chartulary.

Yet, in the early days, the rise to affluence must have been a slow one—we know, indeed, that it was. " Fountains," remarks Mr. J. E. Morris, " can point to no single great lay-founder, as Kirkstall points to de Lacy, as Rievaulx and Kirkham point to Espec, as Bolton points to William and Cecilia de Meschines. This house that was destined to attain to such magnificence grew slowly from beginnings obscure and almost wretched." But if the growth was slow, it was remarkably sure. " The various acquisitions of property by the monks . . .

during the long period of the abbey's existence," writes Mr. W. T. Lancaster in his *Abstracts of the Chartulary of Fountains*, "were very large. By far the greater part of them were in the county of York, but the monks had also an estate of some magnitude in Cumberland, and possessions in one or two other counties. In Yorkshire their estates were very great. In Craven alone, Dr. Whitaker estimates that this property—that part contained within a ring-fence, and exclusive of many outlying lands—must have covered, upon a very moderate computation, a hundred square miles, and if we view in connexion with this great holding their extensive properties between the Yore and the Nidd it may almost be said that their lands extended from Ripon to the Ribble. In the neighbourhood of the abbey they acquired the whole of Aldfield, and lands more or less extensive in Sawley, Markington, Laverton, Grantley, Wicksley, and, indeed, in almost every vill in the vicinity immediately west of the Yore. A great estate was given by the Mowbrays and others in Dacre, Brimham, and other places in Nidderdale. In the Thirsk and Northallerton districts the monks owned about half of Dishforth and Rainton, nearly the whole of Melmerby and Baldersley, and much land at Cowton, Busby, Ainderby, Pickhill, and Kirkby Wiske, and farther north they had property at or near Stokesley and Yarm, and in Cleveland. In the York district, they had, besides a good estate in the city, all Wheldrake and extensive lands in Marston, Acaster, Moor Monkton, Whixley, and other vills. The Leathley family, those lavish supporters of religious houses, gave all Stainburn and about half of Rigton, in Wharfedale. In the south-west of the county the abbey owned much land in Elland, Bradley, and Kirkheaton. And besides their larger properties, roughly indicated in the above brief summary, the monks had very numerous possessions in other places. So early as the time of Richard I, the confirmation granted by that King to the house enumerated about two hundred places

where it possessed lands. The result of all these acquisitions was that at the Dissolution the abbey possessed a clear income of something like £1000 a year—an amount, it need hardly be said, equal to a far larger sum of our modern money."

II. History of the MSS.

The history of the Chartulary of Fountains, as recorded by Mr. Lancaster in his *Abstracts*, is of such exceedingly great interest that some account of it must be given. Probably prepared in the fifteenth century, it was written out in five large volumes, which were originally bound in leather-covered boards, ornamented, the prevailing device being a double-headed bird, displayed. The handwriting is, as a rule, bold and legible; the ink still unfaded; the material, parchment. Of the five volumes, four are still in existence; one, the fourth, is, unfortunately, missing, though it is hoped that—as it is improbable that it has been destroyed—it will yet be found. Volume i contains 327 leaves; Volume ii, 292; Volume iii, 363; Volume v, 424. Volumes ii and v are still in the original binding. Of their history since the Dissolution, Mr. Lancaster gives some interesting details. Volume i was in Sir Robert Cotton's library within a hundred years after the fall of Fountains, and was considerably damaged in a fire which took place in 1731. Repaired and rebound, but illegible in many places, it has been preserved amongst the Cottonian MSS. in the British Museum since 1754. Volume ii has been in possession of the Ingilbys of Ripley Castle for three hundred years. Volume iii, after belonging to the Fairfax family until 1751, was given by a Miss Fairfax to one of the Pulleyns of Burley: at a later date it was bought by the famous collector, Sir Thomas Phillipps; at a still later, by the late Sir Thomas Brooke, who bequeathed it a few years ago to the British Museum. The story of volume v is almost romantic. After a long disappearance, during which many generations of

Yorkshire antiquaries did their best to find it, it was discovered, very recently, in the office of a London solicitor, where it had evidently been lying for ages. It is now safely housed in the Rylands Library at Manchester. In the four volumes known, there are copies of over three thousand documents relating to the possessions of the abbey—grants, quit-claims, confirmations, agreements, law processes, and various memoranda. Mr. Lancaster's careful and scholarly abstract of these runs to close upon nine hundred closely printed quarto pages, an indication of what a vast body of property the abbot and monks of Fountains had to deal with when the Chartulary was written out in the fifteenth century.

12. Extracts from Fountains Chartulary.

To analyse the contents of the three thousand documents contained in the Chartulary would require an infinite amount of time and patience, not to speak of skill. But we can gain some idea of their nature by looking through those referring to one particular place. Let us take those which relate to Dacre, near Pateley Bridge, in Nidderdale, in the heart of the district which was, as it were, the peculiar domain of Fountains. There are thirty-five separate documents — grants, agreements, quit-claims, mandates, confirmations, certificates, and the like—relating to Dacre: they are at the beginning of the second volume of the Chartulary. In No. 1 Roger de Mowbray grants to Bertram Haget the land of Dacre with everything appertaining thereto. In No. 2 Bertram Haget grants Dacre to the monks of Fountains in wood and plain and all things belonging: the monks are to give him yearly two marks of silver "as long as he shall desire to receive them." In No. 3 William Haget makes known that he has granted to the monks of Fountains all that his father Bertram gave, and has quit-claimed to them the recognition which they were accustomed to make to his father: for this quit-claim they have given him twenty-five marks and a palfrey.

No. 4 is a confirmation of the Haget grant, by Roger de Mowbray. In No. 5 Roger de Mowbray makes a grant of various lands in Nidderdale: this document is interesting, because the grantor retains "nothing but stag, hind, wild boar, and birds of prey, but his foresters are to have no power there, and shall not be allowed to enter for any purpose except for guarding the beasts and birds." No. 6 is a confirmation by the King, Henry II, of No. 5. In Nos. 7 and 8 we learn that in exchange for his charter, the abbot and monks of Fountains gave Roger de Mowbray in aid of his journey to Jerusalem 120 marks, with 10 marks to his son Nigel, and 1 mark to his son Robert for their concurrence. No. 11 is interesting because of its reference to minerals; it is a grant by Roger de Mowbray of all copper, iron, lead, and every kind of metal and stone in his forest of Nidderdale, below ground or above; it is further of interest because the document sets forth that the grant is made in compensation for the corn which his men took from the monks, and for 83 marks which the said monks have given him in his great necessity. The truth seems to be that Roger was always getting something out of the monks. No. 12 is a grant and confirmation by him of the grange of Dacre and certain additional lands, but for his gift to them the monks have given to him 100 lb. of silver. No. 14 sets forth that Roger gives to the infirm brethren of Fountains six stags yearly —a proof that the Cistercian rule about flesh-diet was becoming relaxed. Roger seems to have departed this life about this time, and in No. 27 his son and heir John de Mowbray appears with a quit-claim to the monks of all right and claim to have or retain boar, wild or domestic, sow, or other kind of pigs in Dacre and other places. No. 28, an agreement between John de Mowbray and the Abbot and Convent of Fountains, is particularly interesting, inasmuch as it relates to the free chase of Nidderdale, and shows that the Cistercians were beginning to sport a little. While John and his

heirs are to have free chase over the property, the abbot and monks are to retain a certain area for their own pleasure, and are to keep dogs, bows, and arrows within their lodges. There is also reference in this document to the monastic forge at Dacre, and to another close by, and to two furnaces, and to the burning of charcoal. No. 30, which is written in French, instead of Latin, is a mandate by John de Mowbray to his servants in Nidderdale, concerning the profits of the lead-mine found there. They belong, says John, not to himself, but to the Abbot of Fountains.

13. Lead and Wool.

That the monks of Fountains carried on an extensive trade in lead and in wool is well known. Fortune had placed them in close proximity to lead-mines which had been worked by the Romans a thousand years before the first walls of Fountains rose on the banks of the Skell: these mines may, indeed, have been worked by the Britons before the Romans came. But that they were worked to considerable extent in the neighbourhood of Dacre and Greenhow Hill by the Romans during the first Christian century is certain. In 1734–35, according to an article contributed by a local clergyman, the Rector of Ripley, to the *Transactions of the Royal Society for* 1740, two pigs of lead, each weighing about 11 stone, were unearthed on Hayshaw Moor, each bearing the inscription, in raised letters, *Imp Cæs Domino Aug Cos VII*, on one side; on the other the abbreviation *Brig*. This denotes that the pigs (one of which is in the British Museum, the other at Ripley Castle) were fashioned A.D. 87. The community of Fountains appears to have begun working these ancient lead-mines at a very early stage of their settlement; probably, as time went on, they opened out others; certainly, as we learn from such charters as those just referred to, they had full mineral rights in the district. At a point of the dale between Dacre and Pateley Bridge they established

a smelting-works of considerable size: the place is called Smelthouse to this day. Here they used vast quantities of charcoal: it has always been said that the wood of the great forest of Knaresborough was entirely burned up by the Fountains monks in their smelting-works and forges. Some years ago a quantity of lead ore was found in the River Nidd in laying the foundations of a bridge. This, without doubt, had been dropped from the packs of the monastic mules which carried ore from the mines at Greenhow to the smelting-works just mentioned. As to the trade in wool, the Cistercians were always famous as sheep-farmers, and during the best days of Fountains the community there must have had enormous flocks of sheep on its wide-spreading estates. The number of sheep in hand at the time of the Dissolution—between two and three thousand—was probably small in comparison with the number usually kept. Sheepfolds are constantly referred to in the chartularies; shearing-places were established in several places about the monastic lands, and at Kilnsey, in Wharfedale, there was a famous one, whereat thousands of sheep were shorn every year. In those ages in which wool, to be exact, was merely another name for money (Parliament, for example, instead of voting Edward III so much money in 1340, granted him 30,000 sacks of wool), the Cistercian revenues—in the case of Fountains, at any rate—must have been enormous.

14. Byland.

The great and powerful family of de Mowbray is frequently mentioned in the early documents of the Yorkshire Cistercian houses, particularly in connexion with Fountains, Rievaulx, and Byland. Byland, indeed, owed to Roger de Mowbray what Fountains owed, virtually, to Archbishop Thurstan, and Rievaulx to Walter Espec. But Byland, like the other houses, was liberally endowed with lands and properties by other folk of the neighbourhood and county: amongst these

was the family of Engelram, Engeram, Ingelram, Ingeram, or—as we now know it—Ingram. And in connexion with their gift to Byland there is an interesting proof that however pious and amicable may have been the relations between the original benefactors and original beneficiaries, the relations of their successors were not always so satisfactory. In 1239 (Curia Regis, No. 120, Trin., 23 Hen. III, m. 8 d.) the Abbot of Byland summons Robert Engeram to answer in a plea that he should warrant a certain spring with appurtenances in Dale, which the abbot holds of him by virtue of a charter granted by Robert's father, William. William Engeram, says the abbot, gave to God and the monks of St. Mary of Byland a spring, in the territory of Dale, called Wudekelde, and free and sufficient way to the spring for the abbot and his folk, and for all the cattle at the abbey grange of Morton: now, the abbot complains, Robert has so much narrowed the way that the abbot's folk cannot come at the spring to water the cattle; moreover, Robert has so far forgot himself as to seize some of the abbot's cattle at the spring and to put them in pound. And so the abbot claims £100 damages, a terrible sum in those days. However, Robert appears, admits the charter, and denies that he has done anything whatever contrary to its provisions: therefore, says the court, let him wage his law twelve-handed—that is, with eleven compurgators.

15. Curious Rights.

We get an idea of certain curious privileges, perquisites, and rights of the monastic communities from the reports of their legal cases, which show that the monks not only gathered in wealth in various ways, but were quick to resent any slackness on the part of those who were in any way indebted to them. In 1239 we find the Abbot of Byland suing Peter de Brus (one of the powerful family whose name is better known in history as Bruce) for 8000 haddocks. It appears that Peter

has agreed to pay the abbot an annual rent of 1000 haddocks: now he is eight years in arrears with his rent: 8000 haddocks, therefore, he owes, and most unjustly detains. In 1283 the Abbot of Byland goes to law with John de Eyvill about the rights and wrongs of a fishery in the River Swale: in 1282 several men of the Bradford and Oxenhope neighbourhood are prosecuted for cutting the abbot's trees at Wolsendene: in 1369 a certain undesirable tenant named William de Atton is summoned for making bad use of the houses, gardens, and woods which the abbot has let to him at Kirkeby Malesart. Men are frequently brought before the court for digging and carrying away turves from the abbot's turbaries, or for turning out cattle into the abbot's grass-lands, or for damaging the abbot's woods. Clearly it is necessary to keep a sharp eye on things, if the community is to profit by its own possessions.

16. Byland Flocks.

From the legal cases we also get some notion of other possessions than land and wood and fishing rights. In an assize case of 1249 (Curia Regis, No. 135, Mich., 33 & 34 Hen. III, m. 10) we hear that the Abbot of Byland had common of pasture in Kilburn (this is merely an example of what he had in one parish, out of scores in which he had rights) for 600 sheep and their lambs, until separated from their mothers, and pasture for four score and fifteen oxen, two bulls, and thirty cows. In the case Abbot of Byland *v.* Roger and Joan de Burton, Robert and Alice de Burcy, and John and Sibill de Staveleye, arising out of another case in which the abbot was complainant and Stephen de Meynil (grandfather of Joan, Alice, and Sibill) defendant, mention occurs of pasture for 400 sheep at Thurkleby: the same case comes up again, obviously unsettled, six years later. But all around Byland had by that time become a fine grazing country, and successive abbots doubtless knew

that in good pastures, well filled with sheep and cattle, lay the means of wealth and comfort.

17. Jervaulx: The Horses.

Whether the Cistercians of Jervaulx were, relatively, so rich in sheep as their brothers of Fountains and Byland, is not so clear from the available chronicles. But for some centuries they were famous for breeding horses, and it may be that some of the fine racehorses which in our time have hailed from Middleham and the surrounding high ground whereon so many training-stables have existed at one time or another, sprang from the stock sedulously cultivated by the Jervaulx monks. There is in the Cotton MSS. a curious letter written by Sir Arthur Darcy to Thomas Cromwell, in June 1537, in which significant mention occurs of the Jervaulx breed:

> It schall lyke your honourabyll lordschypp to be advertyssed, that I was with my lorde Lewtenant att the suppresyon off Gervayes, whyche howes within the gatt ys coveryd wholly with leadd, and ther is oon off the ffayrest chyrches that I have sseen, ffayr medooze, and the ryver runnyng by ytt, and a gret domayne. The kynges hyeness is att greatt charge with hys sstoodes off mares, att Thornbery and other placys, whyche arr ffyne grownde, and I thynke thatt att Gervayes and in the grangyes incydent, with the hellp off ther grett large commones, the kynges hyeness by good oversseers scholld have ther the most best pasture that scholld be in Yngland, hard and sownd off kynd, *ffor ssurly the breed off Gervayes ffor horses was the tryed breed in the northe*, the stallones and marees well assortyd, I thynke in no reallme scholld be ffownd the lykes to them, ffor ther is large and hye grownde ffor the ssomer, and in wynter wooddes and low grownde to serve them.

The bleak and cold situation of which the first settlers of Jervaulx complained, no doubt soon proved to them that the cultivation of wheat and barley, or even of oats, would not be a profitable undertaking, and they would appear to have turned their attention to horse-

breeding at an early period. Above the abbey were extensive moors on which horses could range amidst pure air; certain it is, at any rate, that the Jervaulx breed became famous, and that a good deal of present-day pedigree blood has sprung from it.

18. Legal Cases.

Jervaulx was one of the least wealthy of the Yorkshire houses, above the £200 limit which was fixed as a demarcation line in 1536, but its abbots were not behind their brethren of the more important communities in insisting and jealously guarding their properties. In the various legal records there are numerous instances of process. In 1284 (De Banco, Mich., 12 & 13 Edw. I, m. 49 d.) the Abbot of Jervaulx sues Roger de Monteforti to perform the services due for the free tenement which he holds of the abbot in Feldon—namely, a messuage and half a carucate of land for homage, and a service of 20*d.* when there is a scutage of 40*s.*, of which homage and service, says the abbot, a former abbot, Thomas, was seised in fee in right of his church in the time of Henry III. Roger, however, declares that the claim is in error: he holds nothing of the abbot. In 1298 the Abbot of Jervaulx sues Nigel de Stayneford, Henry de Stayneford, William Queldrik, and some others, assisting them, for rescuing certain of Nigel's goods which the abbot had impounded at Horton in Ribblesdale. In 1300 the abbot makes complaint against Henry the Forester of Austewyke for pulling down a wall in Horton to the damage of the abbot's free tenement. Seventy-eight years later another Abbot of Jervaulx sues Sir James de Pykering for laying waste, selling, and destroying certain lands, houses, and gardens in Sadbergh in Lonesdale which Abbot John de Newby had demised to Sir James for a certain number of years, an instance that the bad tenant was not unknown in those days. In 1423 the Abbot of Jervaulx prosecutes Henry Yong of Grysdale, yeoman, Henry Fauset of Stedalegayle,

yeoman, and Edmund de Stokdale of Snaysome in Wenslawedale, yeoman, for that they did seize and carry off four score bullocks at Snaysome and Wyddall, the value of the said bullocks being £40, which shows that in 1423 a bullock was worth precisely 10*s*. Sometimes, in these legal records, the abbot and brethren appear, not as complainants, but as defendants. In 1290 one Adam de Haskerugg (Askrigg) sues the Abbot of Jervaulx, Brother Thomas de Mildeby, Brother William de Braxerton, Brother John de Benigton, monks of the house, Brother William de Bentham, Brother William Skot, John de Bellerby, and others for assaulting him at Haleshall on the Sunday after the Feast of St. Bartholomew, 17 Edw. I, and taking him to Elnonhall and there keeping him in fetters and in prison for seven days, and for taking his goods and chattels to the value of £10; to wit, a horse worth 20*s*., and corn worth £9. The abbot answers to this that Adam is his villain. Adam claims that he is nothing of the sort, but a free man. Whereupon the case is put to a jury, but what its verdict was is not recorded (De Banco, Mich., 18 & 19 Edw. I, m. 134). In 1405, according to the Gaol Delivery Roll, No. 191, m. 23, Richard, Abbot of Jervaulx, and William Sallay and William de Middilham, monks of that house, were indicted for compounding a felony. On the previous November 25 one William de Oxthwayte had stolen a bay horse from the abbot and Brother William Sallay at Pateley Bridge, the value thereof being 20*s*. Afterwards, as seems somewhat natural, the abbot and the others took the horse back and allowed the thief to go free. Hence the prosecution, to which the defendants pleaded the general pardon recently granted to all in like case.

19. Accumulation of Property.

All these matters and incidents, it will be observed, have to do with the possession or accumulation of property. They have nothing to do with religion.

True, when the abbot is suing this man for forty pence, or resisting the claim of that in respect of forty acres, he is prosecuting the claims or defending the rights of himself and his fellow-religious. But the vast mass of documents, chartularies, coucher books, legal records, amounting in number to thousands upon thousands where the eight Yorkshire Cistercian houses are concerned, proves that after the first enthusiasm had cooled, the Order was chiefly occupied in laying field to field, house to house, flock to flock, and chattel to chattel. Doubtless much of the wealth so gathered was well and wisely expended in the improvement of the monastic estates, in the furtherance of agriculture, in hospitality to wayfarers, and in relief of the poor, but it is impossible to deny that the greater part of it went in building and ornamenting churches and cloisters in a style out of all keeping with the strictness, the simplicity, and the ascetic principles of the first Cistercian statutes, or that vast sums were spent in litigation. The austere ideal of the original Cistercian plan of architecture gave place to more elaborate building of the church; the cloister, first arranged on the simple lines of Citeaux and Clairvaux, was developed into the magnificence which may be studied at Fountains. The old rules as to simplicity of ritual and the use of vestment and furnishing were broken; in these matters the Order began to approximate to the usages of the Cluniacs, and elaboration of the sanctuary and more attention to ceremony replaced the original severity and plainness. With these changes came others in the rule of life; the laxity which Prior Richard had so vehemently denounced amongst the Benedictines of York, had, by the fourteenth century, appeared amongst the Cistercians of Fountains and Kirkstall: from that time onward the various communities may be regarded as great corporations, whose chief care, while still keeping up a certain amount of discipline, and obeying their obligations of hospitality and charity, was in the administration of vast estates, not always

managed without infinite trouble and anxiety. The chief responsibility of the abbot now lay not in that care for religion which had so characterized Richard of Fountains, but in keeping count of the possessions which had gradually accrued to his house. Hence the multiplication of charters and grants, agreements and quit-claims; hence the constant litigation; the almost fierce grip of the spiritual fingers on the worldly thing.

20. Salley.

Even Salley, poorest of the eight Yorkshire houses, and the only one that failed to come up to the £200 standard of 1536, was as much concerned as the rest in accumulating the goods of this life. It was far out of the way, far more removed from the busy centres of that day than any of the others, set in wild solitudes at the foot of the gaunt and gloomy western hills, yet the worldly spirit found its way thither even across the lonely stretches of Craven. The legal records contain many instances of how the monks of Salley went to law in respect of their lands and property. The legal processes were not always against lay-folk. In 1282, according to the De Banco Rolls, Thomas, Abbot of Sawley, sued William, Abbot of Selby, in respect of a fine made in the King's Court between the late Abbot of Selby and the plaintiff, concerning the manor of Staynton in Craven. In 1300 Abbot Roger brought William de Aldefeld, parson of Bolton in Bowland, before the court in respect of an acre of land in Bolton, which was the right, according to the abbot, of his Church of the Blessed Mary of Salley. Prosecutions in respect of game trespass are recorded at an early stage; they, too, are not always against laymen. In 1285 the abbot prosecutes John de Knoll, parson of the church of Gisburn in Craven, Thomas and John, the said parson's sons, and Edmund de Morton for entering the free warren of the abbot at several places in the neighbourhood and catching and carrying away game—an

instance that some, at any rate, of the secular clergy were married, and that country parsons were not averse to poaching. The usual complaints are found against tenants in respect of waste and neglect of property. How rigorous the abbots were in exacting their dues is shown by cases in which their bailiffs are brought before the courts to give reasonable account of their time; one, who managed the abbot's manor of Sunderland, points out on appearance that Sunderland is in Lancashire, whereas the abbot's writ is directed to the Sheriff of Yorkshire: the defendant is accordingly awarded judgment. Now and then the abbot appears as defendant: in 1433 Richard Redemayn, Esquire, sues William, Abbot of Salley, for his neglect in repairing a certain ditch of water running between Richard's estate and the abbatial domain, whereby the water has overflowed and flooded twelve acres of the complainant's corn-land: Richard wants £20 for damages. And in 1299, Roger, Abbot of Salley, with Brother Richard de Edenford and Brother John de Houeden, monks, are summoned by Roger le Tannur of Quixley for that they did assault him at Sunderland to his grievous hurt.

21. The Salley "Compotus."

Although Salley was the poorest of the Yorkshire Cistercian houses, the list from the conventual register, referred to in the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, shows that it possessed property in thirty-eight different places, most of which were in Yorkshire. Whitaker, in his history of Craven, gives an abstract of the accounts appearing in the *Compotus* of 1381, from which it appears that the receipts that year came to £347 14*s.* 7½*d.*, and the expenditure to £355 13*s.* 10½*d.* The tithes of Gargrave that year yielded £52 7*s.* 8*d.*; the number of acres in the parish is set down as 10,420. The prices of produce and food are particularized. Wheat fetched 6*s.* 8*d.* a quarter; barley, 4*s.*; beans, 4*s.*; oats, 2*s.*;

wool was selling at 2*s.* the stone; 155 quarters of corn were used by the community for bread; the horses consumed 139 quarters of oats. There is a record that no fewer than 255 quarters of malted oats and barley were brewed into ale, but there is surely some error in this, for it would mean that each inmate of the house (reckoning their number at 70, and the yield in gallons of liquor at 60 per quarter) drank 300 gallons of ale in the year, nearly a gallon a day. One entry shows that Thomas Boulton received £1 4*s.* for the year's yield of milk from 24 cows. The wages of 45 servants of the house are accounted for. The prior's chamberlain received £6; the convent cook, 14*s.* 8*d.*; the tailor, 10*s.*; the poultry-keeper, 2*s.* a year each: the wages of the 45 came to under £30. At this time the abbot and monks owned 70 cattle, 30 milch cows, and 35 horses. It is a somewhat significant fact that according to these accounts all that was distributed in charity in that year, 1381, was 5*s.* 8*d.*

22. The Salley Possessions.

The Sir Arthur Darcy who wrote to Thomas Cromwell about the famous horses of Jervaulx came into possession of the lands of Salley at the Dissolution, and in the Calendar of State Papers, *temp.* Henry VIII (xiii. 409) there is a list of the principal holdings of the abbey, which he had granted to him in fee simple, and in exchange for the manor of Grenesnorton, Northamptonshire. He got, May 9, 1538, "the site, circuit, and precinct of the monastery of St. Mary, Sawley, Yorks, dissolved; the lordships or manors of Staynforth, Langcliff, and Stanton; the manor and forest of Gisbourne; a moiety of the manor of Bolton; annual rent of £4 6*s.* from the vill of Grynleton; tenements and messuages in Brandford, Chepyng, Waddyngton, Wourston, Chatsbourne, Downham, Renyngton, Gaisgill, Lytton, Barmby, Rassemell, Cottill, Pathern, Newstune, Swynden, Ilklaye, Farneleaye, Halton, parish of Whitkirk, Cather-

ton, Sledebourne, Dutton; rents in Whitwourthe; the advowsons and rectories of Tadcaster and Gargrave; a rent of 53*s.* 4*d.* due to the late abbot by the Abbot of Fornes; and all other lands which belonged to the said monastery of Sawley." According to the account of the King's Receiver, Leonard Beckwith, the plate and jewels of the abbey were worth £72 2*s.* 10*d.*; the rest of the goods, together with the lead and bells, sold by the King's officers to Sir Arthur Darcy, fetched £300 18*s.* 1*d.*

23. Kirkstall.

The Coucher Book of Kirkstall, "an ancient volume now containing one hundred and fifteen leaves of parchment enclosed in a brown leather cover," which, after being long preserved amongst the records of the Duchy of Lancaster, has been safely treasured in the Public Record Office since 1868, was edited for the Thoresby Society's Publications by Mr. W. T. Lancaster and Mr. W. P. Baildon some years ago, and published by the society in 1904. It had been much damaged in times past, and though the writing of the original compiler is still wonderfully clear, and the ink still black, many parts are undecipherable. Its contents are of a strange variety, not unfamiliar in books of this nature. The book was clearly intended to be a record of the muniments by which the Kirkstall brotherhood held their various properties. But in time the blank spaces between the copies of the charters came to be filled up with other matters, from a Papal Bull to a simple recipe for medicine: odd corners, too, are filled with memoranda of no particular importance. Nor is it a complete record of all the numerous grants to the abbey: it is highly probable that a more important, perhaps a full, chartulary, was at some time in existence, may, indeed, like the missing volume of Fountains, be in existence now in some hole or corner of a library or a legal office. Still, the Kirkstall Coucher Book contains quite enough

to show that between 1150 and 1350 the community had acquired vast wealth in land, houses, wool, goods, and other sorts of property. Like other monastic works of the same class it embraces copies of charters, grants, fines, and, needless to say, a considerable number of reports and accounts of legal processes.

24. Landed Possessions.

One of the first points to be noted in the book is that when the community removed from Barnoldswick to Kirkstall in 1152 it does not seem to have possessed anything. Beyond the original grant of land at Barnoldswick, made by Henry de Lacy (as a matter of strict fact, the land so given, though granted in good faith by de Lacy, did not belong to him at all, but to Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, to whom the monks found themselves obliged to pay rent during his lifetime), nothing whatever seems to have been given to them at Barnoldswick. But almost from the very first days of the arrival of Abbot Alexander and the brethren at Kirkstall donations of property flowed in upon them. Much of this was in their immediate neighbourhood, at places like Horsforth, Headingley, Cookridge, Brearey, Roundhay, Allerton, Austhorpe, Seacroft, Osmondthorpe, Shadwell, Bramhope, Arthington. By the end of the century the community at Kirkstall had become possessed of landed property on three sides of Leeds—west, north, east. But it had not gained anything in Leeds itself. "Even two hundred years later," write the editors of the Thoresby Society's reprint, "the possessions of the abbey within Leeds were merely nominal. It was not until the last seventy or eighty years of its existence that it acquired (no doubt by purchase) a moderate estate in the town. It is somewhat singular to reflect that the great abbey, now perhaps the most valued possession of the citizens of Leeds, was founded and endowed without any assistance from their predecessors, except possibly some small pecuniary help." But lands

continued to be acquired around Leeds—the Reinevilles, an ancient family which had long been leading tenants of the de Lacys, gave land in Bramley and at Armley; Samson de Allerton gave two carucates in West and a bovate in "the other" Allerton: as in the case of Fountains, the Abbot of Kirkstall was soon able to walk many miles round about his church and cloister without setting foot off his own property.

25. Donors.

The benefactions of the de Lacys to Kirkstall did not end with the debatable gift of Barnoldswick and the more certain one at Kirkstall itself. Robert de Lacy, son and successor of the Henry who had made these first grants, proved himself a much more liberal donor than his father. Henry had already before his death given the monks a house at Snydale, near Pontefract; Robert, confirming this, added to it three carucates of land, a valuable gift, which, supplemented eventually by some smaller ones from well-disposed folk of the neighbourhood, came to produce at least £16 a year. Near this was another gift of Robert's, the grange of Loscoe. South-east of Pontefract, some of the de Lacy tenants proved generous: Noel (Christian name not given in Charter ccxiii) and William FitzGerald gave land at Darrington; Richard, son of Alan Noel, supplemented this with more in the same parish; Haimeric gave five acres at Stapleton; Alan, son of Robert, gave four acres in Smeaton. All these holdings, of course, were on the Lacy property. Through the generosity of Robert de Lacy, and later through that of John de Lacy, the Kirkstall community also acquired a considerable tract of land in the forest of Bowland. In the south-east of Yorkshire they got land at Bessacar in the parish of Cantley, near Doncaster: this was given by Adam Fitz-Peter, who also granted them certain common rights at Horsforth. Valuable grants were made to the community by owners in the neighbour-

hood of Bradford: at an early date in the history of Kirkstall Hugh Vavasour gave a moiety of the vill of Newhall-in-Bowling; later, John, son of Reynold, gave three bovates and the service of a fourth in the same township; and John the Archer gave four bovates in Horton, to be held, as appears from No. cclxx in the Coucher Book, by delivery of a pair of white spurs every year. One of the earliest grants ever made to the abbey, nearly contemporaneous with those in Headingley and at Allerton, was that by Adam, son of Gospatric, who gave what developed into a fine estate in the neighbourhood of Keighley. But the number of benefactors to Kirkstall who might be mentioned is considerable, and the particulars of their benefactions still more so. Incomplete as the Coucher Book is, its separate documents run well into the fourth hundred.

26. Lawsuits.

Legal proceedings in defence or pursuance of the abbey's rights are recorded in the Coucher Book at some length, and are of rather more interest than the majority of monastic law cases. Early in the reign of Edward III, William, Abbot of Kirkstall, brought a suit against the King and his mother in respect of the common rights of the manor of Barnoldswick. The epitome of the case fills thirteen pages in the Coucher Book, and is thus summarized by the editors of the Thoresby Society's reprint: "The complaint of the abbot was that Henry de Lacy, the great Earl of Lincoln, who had come to the assistance of the monks in their financial difficulties in 1287, had, some nine or ten years later, taken a large tract of the waste lands appertaining to their manor of Barnoldswick, the oldest possession of the abbey, into his adjoining forest of Blackburnshire, and thus deprived the monks of their common rights over this area, and that this deprivation had continued under the subsequent owners of the forest. The proceedings extended over several years before the case was

ended in the abbot's favour." Document cccxxiv shows how the mercantile spirit had entered into the affairs of the Order. In 1292 Kirkstall agreed to sell all its wool to the trading society of the Betti of Lucca for a period of ten years. During the first three it was to be sold as it came from the sheep, at 11 marks the sack; during the remaining seven it was to be sorted into good, middling, and inferior at 15, 9½, and 8 marks respectively. The Betti fell into financial difficulties and either could not or would not carry out their bargain. But they had paid Kirkstall 160 marks in advance, which was to be allowed them out of yearly payments, and this amount, appearing as a debt against the monks in the society's books, was assigned to the English Crown, whereupon the law officers sued the Abbot of Kirkstall for the money. The abbot, however, easily won his case: he proved that he had always been ready and able to supply the wool, that the Betti had failed in their contract, and that, therefore, the advance of 160 marks was forfeit. Many entries also occur in the Coucher Book relating to the protracted litigation between Kirkstall and the Everingham family with relation to the lands granted by Adam Fitz-Peter to Haverholm Priory, a Gilbertine house in Lincolnshire, which had made over its rights in these lands to Kirkstall This matter formed the ground of legal process lasting over a hundred years; nor was it the only lengthy legal dispute in similar matters in which Kirkstall was concerned.

27. Typical Suits.

Folk who have much property are doubtless often sore vexed by small attempts on it; and in the De Banco Rolls there are numerous instances of how the abbots of Kirkstall were constantly invoking the aid of the law to protect and right them. The Kirkstall community, indeed, seems to have had as much experience of litigation as that of Fountains. In his *Monastic*

Notes, Mr. W. P. Baildon cites forty cases in which its abbot figured, extracted from the various legal records between 1260 and 1517. They are of the usual type found in such records—processes for acquittals of service ; claims in respect of property ; prosecutions for damage to wood, crops, pasture ; forcible seizure and detention of cattle ; making waste of houses and gardens ; trespass in pursuit of game, and the like. One case in 1399 (De Banco, Hil., 22 Ric. II, m. 273) shows that the abbots of Kirkstall were then working coal-mines at Snydale, now in the heart of the Yorkshire coal-field. Richard Bayldon of Snytall is summoned for digging the abbot's sea-coal there to the value of £20, a great sum in those days. In a case of 1292, which appears to have occupied the attention of the court during four different terms (in 19, 20, & 21 Edw. I), there is an instance of those disputes about customary right which were so frequent at this period. John Sampson laid a complaint against John de Brydesale of Kirkestal and Adam le Hunter for detaining an iron hammer which they took from him on Eccup Moor, thereby damaging him to the value of 40*s*. The defendants pleaded that they were the Abbot of Kirkstall's bailiffs, and that their master was owner of the soil of the said moor, that they found John Sampson working on the moor, where he had no right except common, and, therefore, they took his hammer from him. To this the complainant answered that the Abbot and Convent of Kirkstall had enfeoffed him of two messuages and two carucates of land in Touhuses, and he had a customary right to take stones on the moor for building and other necessary works in the said tenements. The defendants replied that they could not admit any such rights without the abbot; the court therefore orders the abbot to be summoned. Another case shows that even if, as Thorold Rogers remarks in his *History of Agriculture and Prices*, the practice of selling villains was practically non-existent from 1260, the abbots, as lords of manors, kept

a tight hold on the folk of villain class. In 1289 the Abbot of Kirkstall prosecutes Thomas de Eltoft, Nigel de Wetherby, and Geofferey Stalle for forcibly rescuing one Robert Bateman, son of Richar Wigan, the abbot's *native*, in his manor of Berdeseye, whom the abbot, for a certain act of rebellion, had put in the stocks, preparatory to whipping him. In the Coucher Book, documents ccxc to ccc record grants of villains or natives by their owners—sometimes the gift is a free one; sometimes a money payment is made, varying from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 53*s.* 4*d.*

28. Roche: the Possessions.

As in the case of Kirkstall, the principal possessions of Roche were in the immediate neighbourhood of the abbey, but the community held certain lands in the adjacent counties of Lincoln and Nottingham, and, further off, in those of Lancaster and Derby. Aveling, in his *History of Roche Abbey*, enumerates well over one hundred different places in which the Abbot of Roche held land and property. As in the cases of the other Yorkshire Cistercian houses the donors were many. Richard de Busli and Richard Fitz-Turgis were the original founders; the first gave "the whole wood from the middle of the road from Eilrichethorpe to Lowthwaite, and so far as the water which is the boundary between Maltby and Hooton, and the two sarts [wood turned into arable land] which belong to Gamul, with a great culture which is there adjacent, and common of pasture for a hundred sheep, in number six score, in the soke of Maltby"; the second gave "the whole land from the borders of Eilrichethorpe, as far as the brow of the hill beyond the stream which runs from Fogswell, and so to a heap of stones which lies in the sart of Elsi, and so beyond the road as far as the Wolfpit, and so by the head of the culture of Hartshow to the borders of Slade Hooton; all that land, and all that wood below these bounds and common of pasture of

all my land, and fifty carts loads every year in my wood of Wickersley" : a very generous endowment on both sides to begin with. As time went on many piously disposed folk added to these lands, with the reasons and after the fashion of those days. Jeremiah, the parson of Rossington, gives all his meadow in South Wood, with his corpse. William and Robert, sons of Gerbode, give thirty acres of land and pasture for 180 sheep at Braithwell. Leo de Manvers gives a grange at Brancliffe. Robert de Herthwic, for the good of the soul of Beatrix, his wife, gives two acres of land at Broom Riddings. William, Earl Warren, makes a handsome grant at Cumberworth ; William de Chaworth gives property near Wadworth ; Eugenia, relict of Gilbert de Micklebring, gives four acres at that place, with consent of Peter de Rhodes, her deceased spouse's lord. Now and then the King himself gives something ; Cardinal Stephen Langton makes the community a present of the prebend of Laughton. In Derbyshire, William Avenal, Lord of Haddon, gives a grange at Oneash ; in Lincolnshire, Walter de Falcunbridge confirms the gift of two ox-gangs which Walter de Kadburne had aforetime made at Kirby ; in Nottingham, Matilda de Moles, before the year 1208, gives to Roche all the lands which the men of Blythe held of Hugh de Moles, her brother, and afterwards of herself in the fields of Serlby ; in Lancashire much valuable property is given at Rochdale by the Lord Robert de Stapelton, confirmed later by his grandson, Warinus de Scargill. One of the Paynels, or Paganels, well known as Church benefactors, Philip, Lord of West Raven, acknowledging that he has " received and had of the religious men, the Abbot and Convent of Roche, six hundred marks of good and lawful sterling money," assigns to them, with Royal licence, the messuage and thirty-two bovates of land at Roxby which from that time, 1293, brings them in a handsome yearly income, worth, at the Dissolution, some £400 a year of our money. So it is, all through

SALLEY

the records; during the first century and a half of their presence in the county all the landowners are disposed to add their quota to the growing possessions of the Cistercians, even if some little matter of money is asked in return. But as a rule all that is asked is the prayers of the community, and sometimes the privilege of sepulture within the sacred walls.

29. Arbitration and Litigation.

After the usual fashion, successive abbots of Roche had much trouble in defending their wealth and property. They, too, seem to have been constantly engaged in litigation, and it was not always with the encroaching layman. In 1310 the Abbot of Roche and the Abbot of Whalley came to differences over a matter of tithes, arising out of the Lancashire possessions of each. Instead of going to the courts, however, they referred their case to a general chapter, which appointed the Abbots of Rievaulx and Buildwas to judge it. These dignitaries seem to have sat at Wakefield; there, at any rate, on the "Friday next after the Feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle, A.D. 1310," they gave judgment to the effect that "the said Abbot of Roche [shall] pay every year to the aforesaid Abbot of Whalley . . . forty pence of silver and one pound of wax and one pound of frankincense at the two terms of the year, viz. twenty pence and one pound of wax at the feast of St. Martin in the Winter, and twenty pence and one pound of frankincense at Pentecost for all tithes of garbs of all lands cultivated and to be cultivated pertaining to the said place of Hillingthorpe, according to the command of the bull of Lord Boniface VIII, Pope." Not all the disputes were so easily and amicably settled, however—as at Fountains and Kirkstall, Byland and Jervaulx, there were constant legal difficulties which necessitated resort to law. One such case in 1300 (De Banco, East., 28 Edw. I, m. 19) shows how the monastic authorities got embroiled in niceties of land tenure. Roger de

Bladdesworth and Joan, his wife, complained that John, Abbot of Roche, Brother Stephen de Staynton, Brother Richard de Weteweng, Peter de Lund and Alice, his wife, and John, son of Nicholas, son of Reginald de Barneby, had unjustly disseised them of a toft, fourteen acres of land, and three acres of meadow in Barneby on Dun. The abbot said that Richard, Joan's father, held the land of him in villainage, and after Richard's death, Alice, his daughter, Joan's sister, held it in villainage, and that Alice afterwards fled the country, and that Roger and Joan wished to enter, claiming the fee as Joan's free tenement, which he, the abbot, would not permit. The plaintiffs said that Alice died seised of the property, and that Joan succeeded as sister and heir, and was in possession until the defendants disseised her. The jury (says Mr. W. P. Baildon, who gives this case in *Monastic Notes*) found for the plaintiffs, with 30*s*. damages, but as against Peter de Lund and his wife for the defendants.

30. Meaux.

Of all the eight Cistercian houses of Yorkshire, Meaux appears to have had more difficulty and trouble arising from possession of land and property than any other. The documents relating to it are not good to read if one bears in mind the original ideas of the founders of the Cistercian Order. It cannot have been within the great and magnificent scheme of Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux that their followers were to spend so much time in either acquiring the goods of this world, or, having secured them, in fighting so strenuously to pocket them, not to speak of attempting to gain more. But so it was in many instances, and notably in that of this East Riding house. "The chronicles of the religious house of Meaux," writes Mr. Earle, who made an exhaustive study of the various documents, "are an account of the acquiring of property, and the struggle to keep it or increase it: and their abbots and monks

are the most highly esteemed who are able best to guide successfully the temporal affairs of the house. There is no religious spirit pervading the chronicles, however much there may have been in the actual house itself; there are no elevating thoughts. The reading of them leaves one with the unsatisfying feeling that the interests of St. Mary lay not in the souls of mankind, but in ox-gangs and wool and mills." This remark may, with all truth, be applied to the records of every one of the Cistercian houses of Yorkshire—after the first enthusiasm for reform and for austerity had passed: the flame of the newly lighted candle had burned brightly and refreshingly for a time, but strict adherence to the plain facts of history compels one to say that the time was limited.

31. Flocks and Herds.

According to the *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, edited by Mr. E. A. Bond for the Rolls Series, the abbot and monks of Meaux possessed landed properties in well over one hundred different places, most of them in the immediate neighbourhood of the abbey, or in the adjacent East Riding In Holderness, and at the foot of the Wolds, and in the country lying between Beverley and Driffield, there are many places to this day called Grange—these, of course, were the monastic granges on the outlying lands. Eventually, the abbots of Meaux farmed out a great deal of their land, and thus became considerable landlords, possibly the most important landlords of the district. But a great portion of the communal property was retained and farmed by the brotherhood. For a long period Holderness has been famous for sheep-breeding, wheat-growing, and horse-rearing; it is probable that the Cistercians of Meaux were the original pioneers in these three branches of agriculture. They certainly produced a great deal of wool, grew a great quantity of corn, and invariably possessed a goodly stock of horses. Mr. Earle, in his

Essays upon the History of Meaux Abbey, gives a tabulated account of the community's possessions in these matters between the years 1280 and 1396. This shows that the house owned :

In 1280, 11,000 sheep, 1000 cattle.
„ 1286, 1320 sheep, 472 cattle.
„ 1310, 5406 sheep, 606 cattle, 120 horses.
„ 1356, 1689 sheep, 293 cattle.
„ 1367, 1471 sheep, 338 cattle, 82 horses.
„ 1372, 2540 sheep, 349 cattle, 80 horses.
„ 1396, 2361 sheep, 330 cattle, 87 horses.

32. Wool, Corn, Stone.

As in the case of the other Cistercian houses, Meaux carried on a great trade in wool. From its store more than once came heavy contributions towards the exactions of the Crown or the Papacy. But the community also did a considerable trade in corn-milling, not only grinding for the use of the house, but for folk resident in the neighbourhood of the abbey. There were several mills on the estates, and at one time the number of persons employed, outside the *conversi*, must have been considerable. Then, also, at Waghen, now Wawne, a village south-east of Beverley, the community had a cloth-mill, whereat clothing was made from wool produced on the conventual estates. And at Brantingham, near Brough, on the southern extremity of the Wolds, it possessed a valuable stone-quarry, given about the end of the twelfth century by Osmund of Kent : he supplemented his gift by a right of way to the Humber, whence the stone was brought by way of the River Hull and the Eschedyke to Meaux. Much of the cloistral buildings and the church was built of this stone, but it was also sold by the abbots to those of the monastic tenants who built on the estates, or improved the buildings already in existence.

33. Legal Proceedings.

Yet in spite of rich possessions in land, in flocks and herds, grain and stone, in spite of the bargain with Edward I, which gave the King the manor of Myton and the vill of Wyk (now the great city of Kingston-upon-Hull) in exchange for more valuable properties (more valuable at that time, at any rate), Meaux was always in debt and difficulty. The Papal exactions were bad ; the Royal exactions were worse ; constantly, in spite of its holdings of corn and wool, the community had no money. More than once its members were dispersed, only to come together again, and to begin afresh the struggle which must needs result when either individuals or corporations spend more than they receive. For in that failure to keep a strict hand on the purse-strings in the matter of outlay lay the secret of the troubles of Meaux. The original idea of austerity and simplicity was being rapidly forgotten ; rich ornament and profuseness of decoration was being introduced in church and cloister : one abbot in particular, of whom we shall hear more, was particularly unmindful of the precepts of the apostles of Citeaux and Clairvaux. But there was another cause of difficulty and of shortness of money—the usual cause. Meaux was perpetually vexed and harassed with lawsuits : once, on a famous occasion, it resorted to the practice, then existent, of the Judicial Duel, in a dispute originally between the abbot and William Lasceles, and subsequently between the community of Meaux and the Benedictine house of St. Mary at York, over the fishing rights of the meres of Hornsea and Wassand, the appointed champions (hired fighters) meeting at York, and waging desperate combat until the Justices put an end to their foolishness. But fighting, as Mr. Earle remarks of this affair, was then the spirit of the age : one cannot help wondering, however, what Stephen Harding would have said of his followers setting on a hired gladiator to vindicate

their rights to take a few fish. But most of the fighting was done in the law courts. The chronicles are full of matters in dispute about land and property: Mr. Baildon in his *Monastic Notes* cites thirty-two typical cases in which Meaux was concerned, all of the usual nature, many of them extending over considerable periods. And on that last point Mr. Earle has a word to say which should not be forgotten when one considers all the facts of monastic litigation—a word as to the bribery and corruption which, without doubt, existed in those days in very considerable extent. "The Abbot of Meaux, the Provost of Beverley, the knights and nobles," he remarks, "knew well, when they engaged with one another in legal warfare, that it was always at great expense, and whether the courts were civil or spiritual, in England or at Rome, there were palms that had to be crossed, and hands that had to dip deep in deep pockets to do it, before any prospect of a favourable settlement of a suit could be imagined."

34. Aggregate Values.

What, when the eight Cistercian houses of Yorkshire had become fully established, when their churches and cloisters were all completely built, when the tide of benefaction in land and property had reached high-water mark, when, say, two hundred years had passed since the first coming of William and his brethren from Clairvaux to Rievaulx, was the sum total of the wealth of the Order in the county? It is a difficult question to answer; perhaps it is impossible now to ever give a really accurate answer to it. But we can get some approximate idea. From about 1400 onward the inflow of benefactions ceased; certainly after 1450, at the very latest, the Cistercians gained no new property worth mentioning: by that year, indeed, their wealth was decreasing rather than increasing. Nevertheless, right up to the period of the Dissolution, this much is certain: Rievaulx possessed great properties in the North Rid-

ing; Fountains owned an enormous tract in the West; Byland had great estates south of the Howardian and Cleveland Hills; Jervaulx owned considerable parts of the Dales; Kirkstall was virtually the most considerable landowner in the Leeds neighbourhood and in Airedale; Roche was in possession of rich properties in the south-east corner; Meaux had a very large holding in East Yorkshire; Salley, on the Lancashire borders; each house possessed lands far away from its own neighbourhood. Though they may have been faultily calculated, we have official statements as to what each house was worth, annually, at the Dissolution: Rievaulx, £278; Fountains, £1000; Byland, £238; Jervaulx, £234; Kirkstall, £512; Roche, £224; Meaux, £298; Salley, £147. This, roughly, means £3000 a year amongst the eight houses. What was the value of money in, say, the reign of Henry VII in relation to its value in, say, the reign of Edward VII. Ten is much too low a figure; twenty is too high; the more reasonable figure is fifteen. Reckoning that money was worth just fifteen times as much in the year 1500 as in the year 1905, the annual value of the eight Cistercian houses in Yorkshire for some considerable period before the Dissolution was at least £45,000. As to the capital value of their possessions, in and out of their own neighbourhoods, it is making a very modest estimate indeed to affirm that it cannot have been less than, at the very least, £1,100,000 of our money—at our money's value of ten years ago.

CHAPTER V

POWER

1. Cistercian Influence in Yorkshire.

It must be obvious that eight corporate bodies, severally and conjointly possessing such wealth as that which had accrued to the eight Cistercian houses of Yorkshire within a hundred years of their foundation, must needs have exercised power of considerable magnitude, not only in their own immediate neighbourhoods, but in the county as a whole. Beginning as small, isolated, obscure communities of men, banded together at first for merely religious purposes, the eight convents rapidly became centres of influence which was exerted in other matters than those of the original conception. In spite of the fact that the Benedictines had been first in the field in Yorkshire, and that the great houses of Whitby, Selby, and York ranked high in the English Benedictine roll, the Cistercians by the thirteenth century had become the paramount monastic power in the three Ridings. Their power was exerted in four different directions—political, economic, social, and ecclesiastical: the last quite distinct from the influence in religion. The political power was exerted through the abbots, many of whom were from time to time summoned to Parliament as members of the House of Lords; the economic, through the trading affairs in which the Order engaged so extensively; the social, through the influence of the monks on men and manners; the ecclesiastical, through the possession of benefices and advowsons. It is almost impossible after the lapse of at least four centuries to

make a full estimate of the power exercised in these directions, but a mere outline of its network suffices to show how great it must have been, and what an influence it must have had on the life of the later Middle Age in a county which was even then sparsely populated, wherein the old power of the Baronage was either dead or dying, and to whose folk the centre of government—London—was very far off.

2. Abbots in Parliament.

At what precise date the Cistercian abbots of Yorkshire began to be summoned to Parliament it is difficult to make out from the various chartularies and documents relating to their houses. But when the Parliament commonly known as that of Simon de Montfort was summoned, as a result of the defeat of the Royal army at Lewes in 1264, to meet at Westminster in January 1265, a considerable number of the Northern clergy were served with writs—the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Durham and Carlisle, ten abbots, and nine priors: by a subsequent writ of summons, fifty-five abbots and twenty-six priors were called up from various English monasteries. One of these was Walter, Abbot of Roche: the other principal Cistercian abbots of Yorkshire were doubtless summoned on the same occasion. There are several records of writs issued to the abbots of Roche. Abbot John was summoned to the Parliament of Lincoln in 1300, but died before it assembled: the writ was duly answered by his successor, Abbot Robert, who subsequently sat in the Parliaments of Westminster, and in the famous Parliament of Carlisle, held in 1307, whereat was passed the statute which forbade the sending of any religious tax out of the country: it was at this Parliament, too, that the houses of Jervaulx, Byland, Roche, and Fountains obtained the King's letters patent for the use of a common seal. This Abbot of Roche also attended the Parliament in which Piers Gaveston was banished the kingdom. That the

more important abbots, like those of Jervaulx and Kirkstall, were similarly summoned seems certain; those of Fountains are known to have repaired to Parliament regularly: Walbran gives a lengthy list of their writs of summons. But from the beginning of the fourteenth century the heads of the various monastic communities began to feel the strain and expense of Parliamentary attendance too much for their resources, and too great a tax on their time. According to Stubbs, the really permanent spiritual element in the House of Lords was found in the two archbishops and the eighteen bishops; the abbots and priors more and more showed disinclination to attend, and were satisfied with their position in the synods of their respective provinces. By proving themselves tenants in barony under the Crown they endeavoured to relieve themselves of the burden of peerage. Stubbs mentions several deeds of renunciation: Northampton Abbey, 1318; Bridlington Priory, 1325; Osney Abbey, 1350; Leicester Abbey, 1351. This process, he says, had probably been going on for some time before it was heard of. The diminution of the number of abbots and priors in Parliament becomes more marked from the time of Edward I onwards. In 1295, sixty-seven abbots and priors were summoned; in 1300, seventy-two; in 1302, forty-four; in 1307, forty-eight. Under Edward II the number varied between forty and sixty; under Edward III, with the exception of one year, 1332, when fifty-eight were summoned, the average number became twenty-seven. Stubbs gives the year 1341 as the point of permanent diminution. The list of those present at the last Parliament of Henry VI shows that no Cistercian abbots or Cluniac and Premonstratensian priors were present. The list of Parliamentary abbots and priors summoned in 1483 comprises twenty-seven names of religious houses represented by their heads; the only two Yorkshire houses were the Benedictine abbeys of Selby and York. Therefore, the eight Cistercian abbots in Yorkshire had

been freed of their Parliamentary duties by this time, and probably for some considerable time previously.

3. Importance of Abbots.

But though the dignity of a peer of Parliament was only his for a limited period during the four centuries in which the Cistercian Order existed in Yorkshire, the Yorkshire Cistercian abbot was a very great and important personage. He was a great local magnate, ranking with earl and baron in degree. He was a great man in synod and in convocation. He was a great man in the commission of the peace. If he did not go a-warring himself—and we know very well that he sometimes did—he had to find fighting-men for the muster-rolls. He was, of course, a great and powerful landlord; he was also, whether in person or by deputy, a great business man, buying and selling. He was always dealing with lawyers, merchants, tradesmen, craftsmen. He was counsellor and adviser: folk carried their troubles to him. In many respects he was the forerunner of the country gentleman whom Addison subsequently drew for us in Sir Roger de Coverley. Perhaps he was never meant to be any of these things by the Stephen Hardings and Bernards of the twelfth century, but he had certainly become all of them by the fourteenth. And as he waxed in importance and grandeur and state, so he changed his own personal mode and method of life. He no longer slept in the dorter with the rest of the brethren; one shrewdly suspects that it was only at times that he sat at the head of the tables in the frater. The Abbot's Lodging sprang into existence; what it was, as regards extent, provision, and comfort, we may learn, in some degree, from the ruins of Fountains. Certainly, they were but three in number, these Fountains rooms, first adapted in the fourteenth century, and subsequently enlarged by Abbot Marmaduke Huby, but they are significant as marking the departure from what was laid down in the *Consuetudines—in dormitorio jacere.*

The abbot slept no longer in the dormitory—he was lodged apart. And he began to have his own servants and his own retinue; the number of servants increased as years went on, and the retinue became as fine as an earl's or a bishop's. Perhaps—the Puritan instincts and characteristics of the Cistercians never wholly dying out—the Cistercian abbot was never so magnificent a figure as that Augustinian Prior of Bolton who went about at the head of a splendid cavalcade, distributing rich gifts wherever he passed, but he was still a very important and lordly one, and now and then he stands out from the chronicles in a way which compels open-mouthed attention.

4. Abbot William de Scarborough.

There was, for example, William de Scarborough, twenty-first Abbot of Meaux, who ruled the house from 1372 to 1394. His magnificence tended towards carrying his Cistercian community clean away from the old austerities of ritual, vestment, and decoration. We have already seen how the framers of the constitution rigidly provided against the use of ecclesiastical millinery; how firm they were about mere linen vestments, simple things, one candle only on the altar, no pictures, no painted glass, no mural decoration, no gold vessels—no undue ceremony or ritualism of any kind. William de Scarborough, abbot though he was, apparently considered that Puritanism in religion and in ceremony had had its day. He caused to be made three pastoral staffs—one was a cross of pure gold; another was covered with silver-plate; a third was of solid gold. He furnished the high altar with silver-gilt chalice, ewer, aspergillum, thurible, and flagons; we hear of vestments ornamented with gold, of copes, white and black; of canopies set over the altars; of sculptured marble and painted woodwork; of images set up in the church; of new bells, one of great weight. All this was strictly forbidden by the original Cistercian rule; Abbot William

de Scarborough doubtless remarked that he knew it, and added dryly, "Other times—other manners." Forbidden, too, by those strict reformers, the early fathers of Citeaux and Clairvaux, would have been the splendid paintings by Brother John of Ulrome, which made the walls of Meaux the wonder of the simple country-folk, but no abbot stayed Brother John's brush.

5. Abbot Osmund of Roche.

Then there was Osmund, fifth Abbot of Roche, 1184–1223, a very notable man, who had been Cellarer of Fountains, and had doubtless highly distinguished himself in that important office. He was a monk of great activity and much ambition, and it was under his abbatial rule that Roche became powerful and rich. He it was who obtained from Pope Urban III the charter which confirmed to Roche its worldly goods and possessions. The wording is clear and precise, showing how the Pope claimed sovereignty over things to come as well as things accomplished. "Whatever possessions and goods the said monastery possesses at present, or in future, by the grant of pontiffs, largess of kings or princes, offering of the faithful or in any other just modes by the help of the Lord it may obtain [let them] remain firm and entire to you and your successors, according to the very words in which we have thought right that these things should be expressed." The Papal charter then specifies the twenty great possessions in land and property, and exempts Roche for ever from the payment of tithe to any man. It was no mean political achievement (for the matter was, of course, a purely political one) on Abbot Osmund's part to obtain this charter. But he quickly did more for his house. His predecessor, Abbot Hugh de Wadworth, had in his time borrowed the great sum of 1300 marks from the Jew money-lenders of York (the Cistercian abbots, like many other Christians of those days, were by no means averse to borrowing from the Jews), which sum (Hugh

having omitted to pay it) Osmund found it inconvenient to make good, wherefore he presently obtained from King Richard a remission of the whole amount, and the Jews who had lent it lost their principal and interest. From King Richard, too, Osmund obtained a charter which allowed the abbots of Roche to hold a court of their own in which they might try such offenders as thieves and trespassers: its powers extended to "all their tenements and men with soke and sac and toll and theam and infangthef." Moreover, he got from Alice, Countess of Eu, being "in my widowhood and in full power over my own body," a charter which further established Roche in some of its near-lying lands in the barony of Tickhill, Osmund knowing full well that if a monastic body wanted to be firmly set in its place there was nothing like having a chestful of deeds and charters, whether from popes, kings, or countesses.

6. Abbot Ralph Haget.

A typical example of the great medieval abbot is found in Ralph Haget, ninth Abbot of Fountains, who ruled from 1190 to 1203, at a period when the first enthusiasm was not yet dead, nor the later decline to worldliness fully set in. He came of a Yorkshire family whose name occurs frequently in the Fountains Chartulary as benefactors of the Order. In his youth he was a soldier, but he had leanings towards the life of the cloister, and by the advice of one Sinnulph, a lay-brother of Fountains, he joined the brotherhood, and in 1182 became second Abbot of Kirkstall, whence, eight years later, he returned to preside over the brotherhood of Fountains. Hugo the chronicler has much to tell of him as "a man worthy of all praise, a mirror of religion, a flower of the Order, a pattern of discipline. His memory is a compound of sweet odours, the work of that unguent-maker who in a fragile vessel of flesh heaped together so many unguents of virtue. He was once a soldier in the world, and did not loose the girdle

of his soldier-life, but changed it for a better. . . . He then took the oath of a new service, and how he laboured for the perfection of purity those know who had the honour of being his comrades at the time of his probation. No one was more prompt, more humble, more zealous in the observance of the way of salvation. He performed with the greatest eagerness all the rules of the Order, was fervent in the work of God, frequent in prayer, patient of abuse, most obedient to commands, always cheerful and eager for works of charity. From the first days of his conversion he possessed the spirit of goodness and a certain flavour of inward sweetness in the wonderful pleasantness of which he was steeped, and easily freed himself from all worldly delights. . . . While he was under arms he had ceased to study, but now made up for lost time by the assiduity of his reading; yet it was in the book of experience that he read what others worked at in the libraries." Clearly an abbot who would have won the heart of the first founders of the Order, this Ralph Haget, even when we have made some allowance for the monk-chronicler's pride in him.

7. Abbot Thomas Swynton.

Of a much later Abbot of Fountains, the thirty-fifth from the foundation, Thomas Swynton, 1471–78, there is an exceedingly interesting account in Walbran's *Memorials of Fountains Abbey*. He was, thinks Walbran, advanced to the abbacy in recognition of the ability and diligence which he had displayed in transacting the secular business of the house: he appears to have had great experience in this, judging from one of his account-books, treasured at Ripley Castle. "He seems," says Walbran, "to have shunned no kind or amount of toil for the benefit of his convent. Sometimes we find him riding to Scarborough, or to Hull, to purchase household stores, then disposing of a portion among their tenants in Nidderdale, and elsewhere, and collecting the money

before a similar expedition. Sometimes he is in Craven, viewing the improvement of the herds, or overlooking the washing and the shearing of the sheep. Again—when a scene may be imagined in the abbey yard not very consistent with our ideas of monastic comfort and seclusion—we can picture him among the newly arrived cattle from Cumberland, alloting them in payment of debts and wages, and shrewd on points of condition. Then, in the castles of the nobles, suing for grace and favour, and anon supporting the litigated claims of the abbey in courts of law, or instructing counsel with facts, or comforting them with wine ; or riding with the abbot in his journeys of State, and drawing a few shillings from his well-worn purse when that of the great dignitary was exhausted. Sometimes, too, perhaps, he drove a little bargain on his own account ; and as he ploughed his weary way up the trench-like roads, stray thoughts might cross his orisons of that golden hoard out of which he could relieve the perplexity of the bursar. In one year he lent to him £36 9*s.* 2*d.*, a considerable sum in the money of that day." "A very graphic picture of one of his campaigns," continues Walbran, "is suggested by payments in his notebook in the year 1455. The convent was seldom out of litigation, and at that time had an abundance of it on their hands. On one day, we find Swinton going to the court at Ripon . . . on another day to York . . . twice he and his brother [monk] Whixley were called to Ripon . . . at the time of the assizes at York, on March 12, Swinton and Whixley found themselves obliged to appear and to remain there for five days. We are not told whether they sojourned in an inn. . . . On the first day [the season was Lent] they were content to dine on fish alone, though perhaps of different sorts. . . . They paid 18*d.* for their repast—more than the price of a sheep. On the second day they were joined by . . . other persons, and dined on fish again, with the condiments of salt and mustard, at the charge of 16*d.* . . . Next day the fish was sup-

plemented by figs, raisins, and spices . . . for which they paid 2*s.* 1*d.* On the fourth day they returned to fish with salt and mustard—cost 19*d.* . . . On the last day, when William Dawtre and other company sat at their board, they regaled them, after the inevitable fish, with spices, figs, and raisins, costing 17½*d.* For the table bread and horse bread [for five days] they paid 3*s.* 2*d.*" As to drink, shared with friends, they spent "In Vino xij*d.*" This Abbot of Fountains was in the year of his election, in company with William, Abbot of Jervaulx, made a brother of the famous Corpus Christi Guild at York.

8. The Abbot as Lord of the Manor.

As one estate after another fell into the hands of the communities by grant and gift, the abbot became lord of the manor, not in merely one—the estate surrounding his convent—but in many places. In each he was, of course, represented by his bailiff. Through the bailiff his power over the people was great. The system of villainage existed for a long time after the Cistercians came to Yorkshire: the various chartularies show that if the practice of selling villains was not at all common amongst monastic owners, the custom of letting them out on hire was well known. It is difficult for us of this day to conceive the exact position of the medieval lord of the manor towards his *natives* of the villain and cotter class. But they were *his*—serfs, slaves, bondsmen. He had the right to keep them to the manor on which they had been born; he had the right to their labour; his was the voice which decided the whole ordering of their lives. If the villain wished to give his daughter in marriage, he must get the lord's consent, and pay *merchet*, a fine: the same custom existed sometimes in respect of a son. Then there were fines to be paid if the villain wished to educate a son for the Church, or if he sold horse or ox, or took over land; when he died, the lord could claim his best beast as a *heriot.*

Very often the lord exercised the right of wardship over the land belonging to a peasant owner who was as yet a minor. Numerous instances affecting such wardship occur in the various Yorkshire Cistercian chartularies: many others, in which it was made the subject of legal process, occur in the court rolls. Consequently, where an abbot, as in the case of the great landowning communities like Fountains and Kirkstall, was lord of the manor in many places, he exercised a vast amount of power over a great many people. But it is generally agreed amongst those who have gone deeply into this matter that as lords of the manor the Churchmen, and especially the heads of the monastic Orders, were well disposed, considerate, and kindly towards their people. Yet it is not to be overlooked that the entire system was one of slavery—modified, no doubt, yet still slavery; that Christianity and slavery are not compatible; and that when Parliament met to consider the proposals made by the leaders of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the Churchmen, represented by bishops, abbots, and priors, joined in declaring that bondsmen were "the goods and chattels of the lords of the manors," and must remain so. But there is no necessity to consider these fourteenth-century Churchmen unenlightened, for we continued, as a people, to traffic in human flesh for a good three hundred years after they were dead and gone, and, in a different and much more shameful direction, we still do so.

9. The Cistercians as Landlords.

This brings us to a consideration of what the Cistercians really were as landlords; what economic position was really theirs in relation to the land of which they possessed such vast areas. Various writers, of varying degrees of authority, have said much on the point of monastic ownership of property, and of the attitude of monastic owners to monastic tenants. What has been written in this way has usually been more or less coloured

by partisanship. The school represented by Burnet and Froude has invariably depreciated anything done by the monastic communities; that represented in modern times by Gasquet and Jessopp has gone—though in a modified fashion—to the other extreme. Gasquet would have us believe that the monasteries remained to the end more or less of what they had been in their early days—a conclusion certainly not warranted by historic fact: Jessopp, as a rule, implies that if they were not all they might have been, there was very little fault to find with them. Writers of the antiquarian school are almost invariably on the side of Gasquet and Jessopp. Hallam, in his *Constitutional History of England*, points out in a foot-note to his chapter on the Reformation that "the whole class of antiquaries, Wood, Hearne, Drake, Browne Willis, et cetera, are, with hardly an exception, partial to the religious Orders." Accurate estimation of the true position of the monks as landlords may, perhaps, be got from modern writers who have carefully studied the question from the purely economic standpoint. Thorold Rogers says the monastic landlords were "fairly indulgent." Mr. Fordham, in his *Short History of English Rural Life*, says, "The disappearance of the monasteries was a blow to agriculture, for some at least of the monks were good farmers, collecting information both at home and abroad, and constantly making experiments with seeds introduced from other countries; whilst their successors were, to quote Sir Thomas More, 'covetous and insatiable cormorants,' who knew little about agriculture." "Amid all the confusion of civil war," writes Mrs. Green, "the industrial activities of the country had developed with a bewildering rapidity; while knights and barons led their foreign hirelings to mutual slaughter, monks and canons were raising their religious houses in all the waste places of the land, and silently laying the foundations of English enterprise and English commerce. To the great body of the Benedictines and the Cluniacs

were added in the middle of the twelfth century the Cistercians who founded their houses among the desolate moorlands of Yorkshire, in solitary places which had known no inhabitants since the Conqueror's ravages, or among the swamps of Lincolnshire." If the last opinion means anything it means that it was a truly excellent thing for the land that the monks came upon it, and that they were, accordingly, good landlords in the sense of being landlords who did their duty by their estates. Yet a modern historian who has had access to documentary evidence of the fullest sort, Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, is not inclined to this opinion. "It is obvious," he writes in his *Introductory History*, "that in the hands of the monks it [the monastic wealth] was producing far too little. The monks were not easy landlords, nor popular landlords: far from it. They were financially in a very bad condition, and quite unfit to enter the lists in the race for wealth which had begun since the great development of wool-growing; many convents were, in fact, bankrupt."

10. Contemporary Opinion.

What, however, was the contemporary opinion?—which is, at any rate, worthy of consideration. There was, of course, a considerable amount of partisanship in the testimony of Robert Aske, as given in his evidence in the proceedings which followed upon the Pilgrimage of Grace: nevertheless, Aske was a clever man, a great man, a trained lawyer, not self-seeking, but full of noble ambition, who, when he gave his evidence, evidently did so with a full knowledge of what he was talking about. As a Yorkshireman he was thoroughly conversant with the state of affairs in the North of England, and especially in his own county and in Lincolnshire, for he and his family had always been in touch with the landed interest and the agricultural communities. His evidence is wholly in favour of the monks as landlords; he lays stress on the way in which they treated

their tenants. "Many their tenants," he said, "whether feod [leasehold] servants to them or serving men were well succoured by abbeys. And now not only these tenants and servants want refreshing there both of meat, cloth, and wages, and know not now where to have any living, but also strangers and baggers of corn . . . the said statute of suppression was greatly to the decay of the commonwealth of that country." He mentioned another matter which comes within the question of good landlordship. "Such abbeys as were near the danger of sea-banks," he said, "were great maintainers of sea-walls and dykes, maintainers and builders of bridges and highways and other such things for the commonwealth." As to popular opinion in Yorkshire at the time of the Suppression, there is abundant evidence that the Cistercians were then, and long had been, highly in favour with the people. Ellis prints in his *Original Letters* a highly illuminative contemporary account of the sack and pillage of Roche, the writer of which shows how the country-folk resented the outrage, and he remarks of it that the extracts which he gives "probably exhibit what was at that time the genuine as well as general feeling of the English public." Henry Jenkins, the Yorkshireman who lived to a truly wondrous age, and well remembered the last Abbot of Fountains, was accustomed to tell of the events which he witnessed with his own eyes: "The country was all in a tumult, and there was great lamentation amongst the people when the monks were turned out." The houses to which he referred were, of course, the Cistercian abbeys of Yorkshire.

II. Probable Truth.

The real truth as to the landlordship of the monks, and especially of the Cistercian Order, seems to lie between the opinions of the two opposing schools. Taking all the available evidence into account, there seems to be no doubt whatever that the folk who lived

on the monastic estates were kindly, considerately, and humanely treated—far more so than the tenants and dependents of the barons had ever been. Poverty and actual want appears to have been unknown. The people evidently turned to the monks as to tried and trusted friends: the monastic landlord without doubt merited the epithet so generally bestowed on him by historians—he was "indulgent." But was he a good landlord from the economic, the purely utilitarian point of view—to be plain, would it have been a good thing for England if the monastic corporations had been allowed to retain the land, of which, according to the most recent calculations, they held at least one-fifteenth of the area of the whole country? The answer to that must be in the negative. The truth is that they became lax in business as they became lax in the observance of rule, and that while they were kindly enough to their tenants, they were letting these tenants have land at far too little rent; in other words, they were not getting out of their land anything like the values they should have got out of it. As producers they were behindhand.

12. Sheep.

The monastic Orders, in this respect, were at their best when they were their own farmers. We are already familiar with Fuller's remark—that the Cistercians were better farmers than monks. To them English agriculture owes a great deal. They cleared wastes. The original surroundings of Fountains and Rievaulx, Byland and Kirkstall, were desert-like. Meadow appeared in place of moorland; arable land replaced the heath and gorse-encumbered uplands. They planted woods and coppices; they directed water-courses; they made bridges and roads. They introduced new methods and new seed: the monk, travelling into France or Italy, kept his eyes and ears open during his foreign wanderings, and brought back some new idea, some fresh knowledge, to add to the common stock. And around

the Cistercian house, as time went on, grew up what had never been seen in the land before—herds of cattle, droves of horses, and flocks of sheep. With sheep in particular the Cistercian will always be associated. He was the first of the great English flock-masters. To him more than to any one else was due the trade in sheep and wool which was to assume such enormous proportions. By the fourteenth century that trade had become the principal one of the country. Bright, in his *History of England*, quotes an account preserved in the Exchequer of the exports and imports in the year 1354. The total value of the exports was £212,338. They consisted of 31,651 sacks of wool, at £6 per sack; 65 wool fells, valued at £89; 4774 pieces of cloth; and 8061 pieces of worsted stuff. The imports, valued at £23,000, were made up of wine, linens, groceries, wax, and a little fine cloth. The tax on the exported wool came to more than 40 per cent. of its value, thus producing £81,846. Of this wool, a vast amount must have come from the Cistercian abbeys. We know from the records that the Order, as a whole, was always being asked to pay tribute in the shape of wool, and that the Royal and Papal Exchequers were always benefiting by the Cistercian trade in sheep. All through the various documents, chartularies, coucher books, legal records, and the like, which are connected with Cistercian history, the sheep, as a wealth-producing animal, figures constantly and largely. From Salley on the west of Yorkshire to Meaux on the east, the Cistercian properties were thick with sheep.

13. Danger of Sheep Trade.

This trade in sheep became a positive danger to agriculture. It forms a striking example of the harm that can be done by over-development of a particular thing. Sheep-farming became so profitable in England that all other branches of agriculture suffered; and the Cistercians, as landowners, were not less blameless than

other landlords. Readers of More's *Utopia* will remember the pertinent and shrewd remarks made by Raphael Hythloday at the table of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, on the evils of this inordinate sheep trade. " Your shepe that were wont to be so meke and tame, and so smal eaters, now, as I heare saye, be become so great devowerers and so wylde, that they eate up, and swallow downe the very men themselfes. They consume, destroye, and devoure whole fieldes, houses, and cities. For looke in what partes of the realme doth growe the fynest, and therfore dearest woll, there noblemen and gentlemen : *yea and certayn Abbottes*, holy men no doubt, not contenting themselfes with the yearely revenues and profytes, that were wont to grow to theyr forefathers and predecessors of their landes, nor beynge content that they live in rest and pleasure nothinge profiting, yea much noyinge the weale publique : leave no grounde for tillage, thei inclose al into pastures ; thei throw downe houses ; they plucke downe townes, and leave nothing standynge, but only the churche to be made a shepe-house. And as though you loste no small quantity of grounde by forestes, chases, laundes, and parkes, those good holy men turne all dwellinge places and all glebeland into desolation and wildernes. . . . One Shephearde or Heardman is ynoughe to eate up that grounde with cattel, to the occupying whereof aboute husbandrye manye handes were requisite . . . besides this, the price of wolle is so rysen that poor folkes, which were wont to worke it, and make cloth thereof, be nowe hable to bye none at all." Now when More here refers to " certayn Abbottes " he doubtless has the Cistercians in mind, for it was matter of common knowledge in his day that the Order, because of its constant intercourse with foreign countries, had brought about great and important improvements in the breeding and rearing of sheep. The trade had reached its highest point of prosperity just before his time, and had also become such an occasion of danger as to bring

about the legislation comprised in the famous Act of Henry VIII which, premising that the great occasion of the present difficulties in husbandry being "the great profit that cometh of sheep," enacted "That no person shall have or keep on lands not their own inheritance more than two thousand sheep," and that no person should henceforth hold more than two farms.

14. Social Connexions.

Of the social status and power of the communities, and more particularly of the abbots, we may gain some idea from various documents which have happily escaped destruction and been preserved amongst the archives of old families. That there was considerable intercourse between the higher dignitaries and the great folk is proved by entries in the accounts of expenses. Thus, in a folio volume, written on paper, preserved at Studley, containing the bursar's accounts of Fountains Abbey during part of the fifteenth century, we find numerous entries relating to visits paid by Abbot Greenwell, a very learned man. In 1457 he made a great many journeys: his expenses are here set down. To Middleham Castle, to visit the Bishop of Exeter, 3*s.*; to Bishopthorpe, the Archbishop of York's house, 11*s.* 5*d.*; he several times repaired to Topcliffe, to see the Earl of Northumberland: the cost of these jaunts is not entered, Topcliffe being, as it were, next door. But he went much further afield—all the way to Woburn in Bedfordshire—that cost £5 6*s.* 8*d.*; thence to Oxford, £1 17*s.* 9*d.* more; thence to Meaux, a further £1 8*s.* 9*d.* Numerous entries occur in connexion with these journeys, or about their time, which show what the bursar paid out for the great man. His stable-boy had a new russet suit, 15*d.* A book, 3*d.*, and paper, 5*d.*, for the abbot. Repairing his harness, 23*d.*; medicine for him, 20*d.*; 2 pounds of soap for his use, 8*d.*; a pair of gloves, 2*d.*; a second pair, 4*d.*; for fetching his staff, 1*d.*; for carrying drink for him to Brimham Grange, 2*d.* There are

entries, too, which show that he not only visited great folk, but had great folk to visit him. He entertains the Duke of York at Swanley Grange; Dan Henry Scruton is paid 2*s.* 8*d.* for fresh fish for the Duke. Also, the abbot very evidently entertains folk of much less degree, sometimes—quite forgetting the original Cistercian prohibitions, he welcomes actors and minstrels and their like—the bursar has to pay them, and so their styles and characters become inscribed in the account book. A Fool from Byland, 4*d.*; William de Plumpton's Minstrel, 8*d.*; the Boy-Bishop of Ripon, 3*s.*; a Story-Teller (*fabulator*), whose name was unknown, 6*d.*; a Fool called Solomon (who came again), 4*d.* And so on. It is very evident that in many respects the social status and tastes of a fifteenth-century Cistercian abbot were very much akin to those of the nobility and gentry around him. The bursar is regularly buying partridges for him—8*d.* is the usual sum; he also buys him wine and pears. And once he pays 4*d.* for the furnishing of the great man with a dish of five hundred sprats.

15. Corrodies.

A certain amount of social influence amongst the surrounding population was without question exercised by the Order through its adoption of the system of corrodies, which was nothing less than the system made familiar in our times by those insurance companies which grant annuities for life on payment of a fixed sum. At some period of monastic history, the exact date of which is doubtful, some one hit on the notion of granting subsistence for life to folk who would give land or money in lump, and by the thirteenth century the Yorkshire Cistercians had so taken up the practice that most of the eight houses had many corrodiers—persons who had purchased the right of maintenance for life, either within the house or without its walls. "Men felt," remarks Mr. Earle in his work on Meaux Abbey, "that in the

bonds of a convent they held ample security, and bought the corrodies which the convents offered for sale as the best means of life annuity that they could effect. It was convenient also at times to purchase a life annuity in this way, say, if a man's tenure of his property was doubtful, or he was threatened with an expensive law-suit, or if his lands were cumbered with heavy charges." Certain good examples of corrodies occur in the chronicles of Meaux. About 1350 Sir John Cottingham and his sister Mabel made over to the abbey certain property in exchange for a yearly annuity of £5. This they subsequently exchanged for a yearly allowance of ten quarters of corn for the duration of two lives, Mabel and her sister Elena's: when Elena died, another sister, Isabella, was put in her place. About the same time, one Thomas de Fishlake, a burgess of Hull, bought a substantial corrody from Meaux by paying £60 for it. In 1396 Abbot Thomas of Meaux is recorded as having sold two corrodies for life—one for £6 13*s*. 4*d*., to John Pelly; the other for just £10 more to John Lesset. Now and then there was litigation about the corrodies: in 1260 (Curia Regis, No. 164, Hil., 44 Hen. III, m. 12) William, son of Cristian, sues the Abbot of Fountains for withdrawing from him the victuals and clothing which he was wont to receive and ought to enjoy for life by the grant of William, a former abbot. In 1289 (the case was before the courts until 1293) Anabilia, "the recluse of Doncaster," sued Stephen, Abbot of Roche, for withdrawing a certain corrody, to wit, five monastery loaves and three gallons of monastery ale every week which she was entitled to for life by the grant of Abbot Walter. There were many reasons why these corrodies were granted; some were given for services that had been rendered, some for services, such as medical assistance, to be rendered: eventually, from a social point of view, they became a danger to the various houses, and, as we shall see, they contributed not a little to their ultimate decline and fall.

16. Right of Sanctuary.

Somewhat akin to the corrody system, inasmuch as it afforded sustenance and shelter, was that of sanctuary. From the sixth century onwards sanctuary had existed in England; it may perhaps have been in practice still earlier. But Æthelbert, King of Kent, formally recognized it in his—the earliest-known Anglo-Saxon—code of laws. In that code it takes first place; the violation of Church *frith* is to be counted twice as serious as the breaking of the King's peace. About a hundred years later, Ino, King of Wessex, made similar provision in his code. "If any man be guilty of death, and he flew to a church, let him have his life, and make satisfaction as the law directs. If any man put his hide in peril and flee to a church, let the scourging be forgiven him." The code drawn up by Alfred the Great in 887 made special reference to sanctuary, and from that period onward the right was always recognized, with various modifications and provisions, until it was finally abolished by law in 1624, though it had, of course, fallen into disuse as regards churches long before that time. England possessed many sanctuaries of peculiar repute and privilege, such as Westminster, St. Martin-le-Grand, Beverley, and Hexham, but the right was claimed at many other places, and notably at the great Benedictine houses, and at certain of the minsters, including York and Lincoln. From a very early period of its history the Cistercian Order claimed the right of permanent sanctuary, and the statute setting forth the claim was duly confirmed by Pope Eugenius III in 1152, and later by his successors, Celestine III and Innocent III. According to Dr. Cox, in his *Sanctuaries and Sanctuary Seekers*, the Order never made any particular effort to attract seekers after safety in England, but contented itself with sternly upholding its privilege if ever occasion arose. Still, the Cistercian abbeys of the North were certainly known as sanctuaries, for Archbishop Peckham,

in a letter written to Robert Malet in 1289, speaks of wrongdoers betaking themselves as converts to the great abbeys of the Cistercians in the North Country, and there finding safety. A certain number of the *conversi* were doubtless recruited from this class, and after proving their penitence, were admitted and pledged to lifelong labour in the service of the community.

17. An Example.

Dr. Cox quotes from the annals of the Cistercian house of Waverley a notable example of the power wielded by the Church, armed with the power of sanctuary right, in the reign of Henry III. About Eastertide, 1240, there came to Waverley Abbey a young man, who announced himself as a shoemaker, and being admitted and proved of a devout turn of mind, was put to his own trade in the service of the house. Until the following August all went well and peaceably: then arrived a certain knight and his retinue who demanded the young shoemaker on a charge of homicide, and, in spite of the strong protests of the abbot and monks, seized upon him and carried him off. Thereupon the abbot laid an interdict upon his own church, with the consent of his brethren; no services were to be said until redress had been afforded and satisfaction made. The Papal Legate was at that time in England (Otto, Cardinal-Bishop of Palestrina, who was here from 1237 to 1241), and to him the abbot applied. But the Legate was either remiss or lukewarm: the abbot went to the King. The King was sympathetic, but his Council was not, and it was not until the abbot had promised to withdraw his interdict and resume his services that his petition was considered. But he was a man of persistence and determination, and in the end he won his case. It was formally declared that the enclosures of all Cistercian houses and granges were exempt by papal authority from civil action, and that all persons violating their sanctuary were, *ipso facto*, excommunicate.

Upon this, the young shoemaker was restored to the abbey; those who had haled him thence were made to appear at the gate; there they were publicly whipped by one of the monks and the Vicar of Farnham, and that done, were absolved by the abbot, who doubtless mingled some sound advice with his forgiveness.

18. Educational Influence.

It is difficult to arrive at a true estimate of the part played by the Cistercians in developing education in the Middle Ages. Thorold Rogers speaks, in general terms, of the monks as "the founders of schools." The writer of the manuscript referring to the suppression of Roche Abbey, quoted by Ellis in *Original Letters* (supposed to have been written by one Cuthbert Shirebrook, a South Yorkshire clergyman, who was educated at the Free School of Rotherham), says, "They taught the unlearned that was put to them to be taught; yea, the poor as well as the rich, without demanding anything for their labour, other than what the rich parents were willing to give them." Gasquet, in his *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, says, "It is vain to speculate on what might have been, but it is certain that the progress of sound learning represented by such men as Warham, More, Colet, and their friends, was arrested" (by the Dissolution of the religious houses). This remark is without doubt true so far as it concerns the Benedictine Order. But how far does it apply to the Cistercians? Much confusion exists generally as to the state of education in England previous to the Reformation. To hear some—a great many—people talk, one would gain the idea (if one did not know better) that there was next to no education in the country, especially for the poor, before the sixteenth century. That, of course, is pure nonsense; there was a great deal of education in the country, available for even the poorest boy, who indeed, even if he were the son of the meanest bondman, had—granted his undoubted possession of ability—the chance

of proceeding to one or other of the two universities. The only Englishman who ever occupied the papal throne, Nicholas Breakspear (Hadrian IV), was of mean birth. So was Cardinal Easton. Cardinal Langley, Bishop of Durham and Keeper of the Great Seal, was the son of a Yorkshire farmer. Dr. Watson, in his book, *The Old Grammar Schools*, says that the total number of grammar schools in England before the Reformation was three hundred; Mr. A. F. Leach, the best authority on the subject of pre-Reformation education, estimates that there was one such (grammar) school for every 8300 of the population. Clearly, from all we can learn of the times in question, education was neither neglected, nor difficult to obtain between the Norman Conquest and the sixteenth century. There were, of course, chief centres—the cathedral churches, the episcopal houses, the monastic houses. But as regards the last-named, all the available evidence goes to show that the love and spread of learning was almost entirely confined to the Benedictine Order. The followers of St. Benedict had always been devoted to study and the love of books. Their founder had ordered his disciples to give four hours a day to study, and had commanded the formation of libraries: "A cloister without a library," said he, "is as a fortress without an arsenal." William of Malmesbury went further. Neglect of learning in a monastery, he said, was a certain sign of decay. The Benedictine abbots were zealous in collecting books and manuscripts; their scribes were always at work, copying, collating, adding to the literary treasures of the house. In Yorkshire, at St. Mary's of York, at Selby, and at Whitby, the Benedictines carried on the tradition of the great school of York, of which Alcuin had been one of the first flowers; to the Benedictines one owes the best and most dependable of the medieval chronicles, though we owe much also to the Augustinian Canons, of whom William of Newburgh was a conspicuous example of zeal and learning. To the various houses

of the Benedictines and the Augustinians, schools were attached whereat two classes of boys were taught, the *oblati*, who were intended for the cloister; the *nutriti*, who were children of the neighbours and showed no sign of vocation to the monastic life. In these schools grammar, logic, arithmetic, music, drawing, and even architecture were taught; so, too, was theology. Therefore, whoever says, or thinks, that there was next to no education in England before the Reformation, says or thinks what is not true. "Unlettered ignorance ought not to be alleged against the middle and lower classes of these ages," says Stubbs in his *Constitutional History*; "in every village reading and writing must have been not unknown accomplishments, even if books and paper were so scarce as to confine these accomplishments practically to the mere uses of business. Schools were by no means uncommon things; there were schools in all cathedrals; monasteries and colleges were everywhere, and wherever there was a monastery or a college there was a school." He adds further: "The Middle Ages did not pass away in total darkness in the matter of education; and it was not in mockery that the Parliament of Henry IV left every man, free or villan, to send his sons and daughters to school wherever he could find one. For anything like higher education the universities offered abundant facilities and fairly liberal inducements to scholars; every parish priest was bound to instruct his parishioners in a way that would stimulate the desire to learn wherever such a desire existed." And he adds to this a sound and unassailable argument—how could Lollardism have gained the hold on the people which it undoubtedly did gain, for a time, by the secret propaganda of cheap tracts and pamphlets, if the faculty of reading had not been widely diffused?

19. Little Love of Learning.

But our present purpose is to find out how much share in education and in the encouragement of learning

BYLAND

and in the furtherance of love of books was taken by the Cistercians, and especially by the eight Yorkshire houses. The plain truth seems to be that whatever it was, it was a very insignificant one. In spite of the fact that the Cistercians of the first age looked to St. Benedict as their master and example, even they did not share his opinions as to the value of books. There are no evidences that the Order ever, at any time, cherished any great love of letters. We know that from the beginning it was absolutely forbidden to teach the *conversus* to read or write. If he could read or write before he gained admission to the Order, he was not to exercise his powers again : if he was illiterate, as he usually was, he was condemned to lifelong illiteracy. This hard rule was, of course, intended to kill two very unmonastical qualities—ambition and discontent—no true monk must be ambitious ; no true monk must ever look further than his appointed lot. Ignorance, then, not only reigned, but was insisted upon amongst the Cistercian lay-brothers ; and the *conversi* formed a very considerable proportion of the community. Nor, so far as we can gather, was there ever any great love of education or learning amongst the *monachi*. Now and then we hear of a really learned man, like Abbot Greenwell, of Fountains ; but out of the Yorkshire Cistercians no great scholar, no painstaking chronicler, no profound student emerges. Nor do we hear of the formation of libraries, nor of the collection of manuscripts. In spite of St. Benedict's remark, the Cistercian houses seem to have been content to have remained as fortresses without arsenals. Gibbon, when he personally visited Clairvaux, some centuries after its establishment, during which it had certainly had time to accumulate vast quantities of books, remarked that while St. Bernard would have blushed at its pomp and grandeur of church and cloister he would have asked in vain for its library. And there was certainly a similar paucity of books in the eight Cistercian houses when the crash came under Henry VIII.

One hears a great deal about the Cistercian possessions in the way of land, houses, woods, mines, quarries. The sheep, cattle, horses, were numbered by thousands. The vestments and furnishings were particularly rich. There was much gold and silver plate : 2840 ounces at Fountains (this did not include the solid gold cross and retable of the high altar) ; 522 ounces at Rievaulx ; 516 ounces at Byland. But there is no mention of libraries ; no catalogues of books—beyond service books. And where there were no books it is not likely that there would be any schools. There is, indeed, nothing to show that the Cistercians ever exercised any educational power in Yorkshire ; there are no records of schools attached to their houses. We know from Mr. A. F. Leach's book *Early Yorkshire Schools* that there were schools at York, Beverley, Ripon, Pontefract, Howden, Northallerton, Acaster, Rotherham, Giggleswick, and Sedbergh ; but we do not hear of any instruction given at Kirkstall, even when Leeds was fast growing at its side, nor at Roche, set between four rising towns. Perhaps, in spite of the grammar schools of the old boroughs just mentioned, Yorkshire was backward in educational progress. One would have thought, considering their popularity with the families of knight and squire, that the Cistercians would have helped in the education of the children of the gentry. But we have it on the authority of Miss M. H. and Miss R. Dodds, in their monumental and deeply learned work on *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, that when that famous rising took place—1536—there were very few of the Yorkshire gentry who could either read or write.

20. Byland Books.

Still, the eight houses possessed something in the way of books—perhaps more than we give them credit for, though it will always remain a strangely unexplained thing that lists of libraries are not included in the inventories which were made, with a good deal of care,

at the Suppression. The late Mr. J A. Walbran, in a paper read at Byland to the members of the Yorkshire Architectural Society, in June 1864, mentioned four books rescued from Byland Abbey, and now in the British Museum. "The Harleian MS. 3641," he said, "which was rescued by Harley from the hands of some ignorant persons in London, in the year 1716, is a beautiful folio copy—of the twelfth century, slightly deficient at the end—of William of Malmesbury's *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, inscribed on the first page, *Liber Sanctæ Mariæ de Bellelanda*. A similar inscription will be found on the dorse of the 112th folio of the Cotton MS. *Julius*, A. xi—a collection, in small quarto, of several historical and biographical works, the titles of which will be found in the printed catalogue. It once belonged to Lord Burghley, and was given to the Cotton Library, in 1609, by Mr. Henry Savell. There is internal evidence that the Royal MS. 5 E. xxii, an octavo volume containing eight treatises of Gregory Nazianzen, transcribed in the twelfth century, belonged to Byland, and the like with reference to the Royal MS. 8 F. xv, a quarto of equal antiquity, in which will be found eighty-three Epistles of St. Bernard, his *Apologia de vitâ et moribus Religiosorum*, and *Patri Abelardi Haeresium Capitula*. Among the collection of manuscripts formed by several members of the Savile family, and dispersed by sale in 1861, was a splendid vellum folio of the thirteenth century, inscribed on the top of the first leaf, *Liber Sanctæ Mariæ de Bellelanda*. It contained Bede's *Opusculum in Librum Actuum Apostolorum*, with his Exposition of the Canonical Epistles of the Apostles St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude. In the catalogue it is described as written by an English scribe, with painted capitals, in the original oak boards, covered with ox-hide, having brass knobs to protect the hair"—a good example of the care exercised by medieval binders.

21. Charity.

Just as much controversy has always hung around the position of the Cistercians as landowners, so there have always been two schools of opinion on the vexed question of their charities. The conventional notion is that day by day, at the gate of the abbey, the almoner, full of love and kindness, distributed food, clothing, money to the poor. Nobody living within touch of a Cistercian house wanted anything. Consequently, there were no poor, and so no need of Poor Laws, workhouses, overseers, guardians, relieving officers, and all the rest of the bad things that came with Elizabeth. Eighty thousand people, say those who favour this highly drawn view of things, were turned literally on to the streets and highways when the monastic houses were swept away: hence the setting up of the Poor-Law administration which has always been such a matter of vexation. But it must be obvious that all this is an exaggeration. There is no doubt that 8000 religious were turned out of their houses; there seems no doubt, either, that 80,000 people suffered because of this summary Suppression. But these 80,000 people were not folk who had lived on monastic charity—rather, they were folk who had been, more or less, in monastic employ. Doubtless the Yorkshire Cistercians, in common with all religious, gave away a good deal in charity; it may have been, as one school of critics says, a very bad thing for the people, making them into mere dependents, encouraging idleness and the like; it may, as another school says, have been but the fulfilling of the law of Christ. But one cannot help wondering, after closely examining all the known records of the Cistercian houses of Yorkshire, if this relief of the poor ever existed—save in the early days of settlement—to such an extent as has commonly been supposed. Some of the houses had been supplied with funds for the special purpose of daily alms. Meaux, for example, had no fewer than

eighteen grants of this sort for free and perpetual alms to be made at the gate. But were these kept up? Did the communities give away money, food, clothing, as constantly and generously as has been said? There are a good many evidences that in the last stages of their career they did not, that charity largely ceased, and that what was given away was in the shape of doles, made in broadcast fashion, now and again, with very little discrimination, and then, not out of the funds of the community, but from private donors who made the monks their almoners. In the later records of the houses, while there are multitudinous entries of moneys expended on the community itself, on meat and drink, on vestments, on gold and silver, on matters connected with conveyance of property, on trade, and especially on legal expenses, there is very little to show expenditure on poor relief. The entry of 5*s.* 8*d.* bestowed on the poor at Salley in 1381 is significant. "It was," remarks Grainge, "less than one-thousandth part of the abbey's income." In fact, so far as we can gather from records, the Yorkshire Cistercians did not compare favourably with the other Yorkshire religious Orders in this matter of charity. St. Leonard's Hospital at York, founded about the time of the Norman Conquest, is credited with having regularly maintained between two and three hundred poor and infirm. At Easby Abbey meat and drink were distributed weekly to several poor persons; there was a daily dole; there were special doles on special feasts. We learn little of this sort of charity amongst the Cistercian communities; what does seem to be the truth is that on their estates the folk were pretty much in the position of those people who nowadays live on the well-managed estate of a benevolent country gentleman, and are put in the way of earning sufficient by doing small tasks in return for numerous quiet little gifts: they were, in fact, hangers-on, who picked up the crumbs. Naturally such people felt it bitterly when the tables of their masters were ruthlessly levelled with

the ground. From the monastic landlords fell many crumbs : the new order, in cutting the bread, took care to make none.

22. Ecclesiastical Influence.

At their first coming into England, the Cistercians, by their zeal and enthusiasm, their simplicity of life and austerity of practice, exercised great influence in matters of a purely religious nature. That influence died out. Their sheep were the sheep of commerce ; their flocks those of the meadow and the moor. But the religious influence was replaced by a considerable amount of ecclesiastical power. In common with the other religious Orders they became possessed of a large number of advowsons ; each of the eight Yorkshire houses held many. Into such a living was often put a priest who was but ill-paid. " Neither he nor the occasional visitor from the monastic house," writes Dean Stephens, " had any permanent interest in the parish." Very often the monastic houses farmed out their livings to clerks for a small rent : hence arose many difficulties and disputes. At first, to be sure, the Cistercians set themselves against this system. " At starting," remarks Dr. Jessopp, " the Cistercians were decidedly opposed to the alienating of tithes and appropriating them to the endowment of their abbeys, and this was probably one among other causes why the Cistercians prospered so wonderfully as they did during the first hundred years or so after their first coming here." But as time went on, the Order fell into line with the older Orders in this respect, and thus originated the numerous difficulties about vicarages and advowsons and ecclesiastical rights in which the Cistercians figure so constantly in the legal records. Gasquet would have us believe that the relations between the religious and secular clergy were as a whole amicable and good, but the entries in the various legal chronicles say otherwise. The disputes between the abbots of the eight Yorkshire houses and the secular clergy were

numerous, constant, and bitter; there is much truth in Dr. Jessopp's remark that "when the monasteries fell, the clergy were the very last people to lament their fall." And the real secret of this bad and unhappy state of things lay in the fact that the Cistercians were free of episcopal supervision and visitation. From the beginning the Order stood firm against interference by bishops. Even Stephen Harding himself, as Fowler points out, "took care to secure his Order against the influence of secular bishops . . . the words 'Salvo ordini nostro' were added to the oath of canonical obedience, taken by every abbot on receiving the benediction from the bishop." This freedom from episcopal supervision was obtained, of course, with papal sanction; hence the Order looked direct to Rome when it came in conflict, as it constantly did, with diocesans. And this was one of the things which contributed to its eventual fall. Yet the freedom had an even worse feature than adherence to an overseas power, for in strict practice it meant that outside themselves an abbot and his house were responsible to no one.

CHAPTER VI

DECLINE

1. Failure.

No one has ever written of English Church life in the later Middle Ages with more understanding and sympathy, nor with a more scrupulous desire to be fair and truthful, than the late Dr. Jessopp, whose various books on the subject have caused him to be regarded as a leading apologist of the monks and friars who played so large a part in English life between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries. As scholar, antiquary, and archæologist, he deeply resented the erroneous and misleading views which had prevailed for so long a period, and in numerous writings he set himself to the task of making clear to nineteenth-century readers what the real truth was as to certain aspects of English history at and before the Reformation. Thousands of readers learned from him more of what monasticism had really been than they had ever known before; a still larger number found in his account of the friars information which probably surprised them. Until his time, the average Englishman, if he thought of the old monks at all, thought of them as a pack of lazy fellows who ate and drank of the best; of the friars, as of a tribe of licensed beggars, whose proper place was the nearest house of correction. Dr. Jessopp did much to place both monks and friars in their true light, clearing away the rubbish which had gathered round the original structure. Many people considered him unduly prejudiced in favour of the old institutions: he has been placed in the forefront of that

school of writers which insists that things before the Reformation were not by one-half so bad as another school has made out they were. Yet what were his conclusions as to the exact place of monasticism in English history? He states them plainly in a paper written in 1893. "After a trial of some two or three centuries the monks had fallen very far behind their ideal. As houses for the studious, as nurseries for scholars pursuing their researches, as schools for the rising generation, the religious houses had proved a failure. The few splendid exceptions only proved the rule that the monasteries were doing less than was expected of them in the way of raising the standard of morals, devotion, and, least of all, of learning." Here, then, is the definite conclusion of a truly competent authority—the religious houses had proved a failure.

2. Departure from the First Rule.

There are reasons for all failures. What was the reason of this failure?—particularly in regard to the Cistercians, who had begun their life in England with such splendid promise? To answer that question satisfactorily, we must once more look back to the Cistercian ideal. That may be summed up in a sentence —austerity of life, devotion in prayer, strictness in labour. Anything in excess of this, any departure from this, was not in the original conception. Simplicity was the keynote of all. Such outward manifestation as was unavoidable was to be cut down to the primitive. Architecture was to be plain; ritual to be plain; vestments to be plain—ornament, decoration, embellishment were to be rigidly excluded. Not the outward seeming, but the inner truth was the object aimed at. The plain Latin cross in the planning of the first Cistercian churches; the vestment of plain linen or fustian; the one iron candlestick of the altar; the rigid rule as to the exclusion of gold vessels; the forbidding of pictures and stained

glass—these things were full of significance. Not outward show, but inward piety was to be the distinguishing mark of the disciples of Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux. And to that ideal the first Yorkshire Cistercians kept, but their successors departed from it. How far they departed we may judge by considering what the eight houses were in outward aspects in the fifteenth century. The ancient simplicity and plainness had gone. Church and cloister alike were, in respect of architecture alone, the marvels of the countryside. The severity of the original plan had long since given place to carefully elaborated detail and magnificence. The windows blazed with colour: the inner walls were bright with mural decoration. The one iron candlestick of the high altar had been replaced by many, of precious metal; the silver-gilt altar vessels by chalices, ewers, flagons, and dishes of pure gold, set with precious stones; the wooden cross, two mere strips of lath, painted, had made way for one of solid gold; a solid gold retable supported the lights. Instead of the plain linen or fustian vestments, vestments of the finest silk, ornamented with gold, silver, and gems, were stored in profusion in the sacristy chests; every church possessed numerous magnificent copes, the use of which had been at first forbidden, or severely restricted. The ritual of the church was carried out with as much pomp and ceremony as was used in great cathedrals, or in the Cluniac churches; the Cistercians, in fact, had fallen into line with the ceremonialists, and had forgotten their original Puritan notions. We may be sure that the first Abbot of Fountains thought himself well provided for if he possessed a silver chalice and paten and one set of plain linen vestments, but his successors of the fifteenth century could point to altar plate which ran into the thousands of ounces, and to vestments which were not only numbered by the score, but were fashioned of the richest materials.

3. Cessation of Labour.

Nor was it only in these things that the change was apparent. The first Cistercian monks had not only prayed, but worked; they were as ready to put their hands to the spade and the pick as they were quick to put their knees to the pavement. With their own hands they felled the tree, cleared away the brushwood, prepared the rescued soil, sowed the seed, reaped the harvest. With their own hands they tended and sheared the sheep, tore the ore from the mine, smelted it at the forge. The first houses were hives of industry. Whatever was done on the first-given lands was done by the brothers themselves, according to the rule of the founders. Truly they earned their bread before they ate it. Far different had things become by the time when Fountains was lord of most of the land between Ripon and Craven, and Kirkstall owned many a thousand acres in the heart of the county. Not even an army of *monachi* and *conversi* could have worked such enormous possessions. And so, instead of working their land themselves, as it was originally intended they should, the communities began letting it out to farmers—henceforth their subsistence was derived, not from their own daily labour, but from rent. We may truthfully say that the decline of the Order began when its members first handed over the soil to other men, and instead of raising produce from it by their own industry, accepted payment for its use. The original idea, as exemplified at Citeaux and Clairvaux and in the first Yorkshire settlements, had never contemplated the transformation of the monk into the landlord. Land, doubtless, he was to possess, in reasonable quantity, but he was to till it with his own hands. Now as soon as the monk began letting other men till his land and took rent for the permission he became a landlord—and a landlord, in theory, is one who stands by while another labours, and the theory is as we know usually reduced to practice. As regards

their landed possessions, the Cistercians eventually became brotherhoods of bachelor gentlemen, whose estates were let on easy terms, and who were chiefly anxious that matters should proceed on equally easy lines so far as themselves and their tenants were concerned. It is impossible to deny that during the last stages of their history the Cistercians in Yorkshire were not given to manual labour, that the *conversi* had largely disappeared from the houses (after 1350 they practically disappeared altogether in most communities), and that hired servants did the work of the establishments. In view of their enormous possessions each of the eight Yorkshire houses ought to have been supporting a great community, but we know from the Suppression papers that there were comparatively few inmates in any one of them. These few, so far as we can gather, lived the lives of comfortably installed fellows of a college ; their business was managed for them by their duly appointed officers, and while they kept up the ritual duties, they apparently had no more to do than is done by a cathedral staff at this day. Between them and the first Cistercians there was as great a difference as between the sloth and indulgence of St. Mary's at York against which Prior Richard protested, and the privation and poverty which he bravely faced in Skeldale in the first bitter winter of his exodus.

4. Grasping at Property.

Money was not the thing that Stephen Harding went out to seek when he left Molesmes with the rest of his companions ; money, we may be sure, was not in Prior Richard's thoughts when he walked out of York bereft of everything but the clothes on his back. But money forced itself into the Cistercian plan before many years were gone, in the shape of land and houses, lead-mines and sheep, stone-quarries and wool-warehouses, and it tended to the Cistercian decline. For when we come to the plain truth, the Cistercians forsook God for

Mammon. What had they to do with money—if they meant to keep to the good, sound idea of their beginnings? What had they to do with the world which bought and sold, and was greedy in amassing, and unscrupulous in dealing, and envious of other men's goods, and was for ever scheming and contriving in the scraping the second penny to the first, and this perch of land to that acre? Nothing—yet the whole history of the eight houses makes a story of constant and unsleeping accumulation of property. It had been better, far better, for them if men had not been so generous; if great nobles had stayed their hand in flinging them a parcel of land here and another there; if there had not been so many rich gifts at their altars; if such encouragement had not been given them to build their walls and extend their boundaries. But during their first fifty years of existence in Yorkshire they became the fashion, and it may be that they then believed they would always remain in fashion. It is strange, considering how well versed in Holy Writ they were, like all Churchmen of that age, that they never re-read the story of Joseph, reflecting what befell him when a king arose who knew him not.

5. Cessation of Endowments.

For there came a time when the pious founder, the devout benefactor, the zealous patron, disappeared from the Cistercian ken. It is not difficult to put oneself in the place of the medieval abbot who found lands and money flowing in upon him at such a rate that he thought it no sin to make the church more stately than he had at first intended, or to house his community in a cloister much more commodious than he had first planned. He naturally thought that the stream of benevolence, instead of decreasing in volume, would grow stronger and richer. Unfortunately, the stream narrowed, grew shallower, dried up. The time came when there were no new endowments to be recorded in

the chartularies. It came almost suddenly. We can almost put our fingers on the precise moment wherein the public ceased to give to the Cistercians in Yorkshire. Up to a certain point in time they were always getting gifts of lands and properties. Suddenly, nobody gives any more. Why? There must be some reason. In truth, there were many. One was the shifting of public favour. The friars came: they were something new; their zeal was infectious; they became the fashion: let us give to the friars, black or grey, instead of to the monks, who, to be sure, are already well provided for. Without a doubt, the Dominicans and the Franciscans supplanted the monks in the popular sympathies and affections. We have plenty of proof of it: the records of benefactions show that after the coming of the friars, grants of land and property slip away from the monks and are given to the new-comers. They are the newest fashions in religion, and religion has its fashions, like everything else. So the friar gains and the monk loses, and there is no love lost between them, any more than there is any love lost between them, lumped together, and the secular clergy, who heartily dislike both. Here, certainly, is one reason of financial loss: the Cistercians are no longer the mode. And possibly the people are beginning to see that the Cistercians are not quite such saintly characters as they were in the beginning.

6. Money.

So the communities which have launched out, building grandly, as if for ever, find that money does not come in as it used to, and there begins that long battling with financial difficulties which is so marked a feature of Cistercian history, and so very unsuited to a Christian monastic Order. Once more let us insist—for it is the very essence of our argument—that monks should have nothing to do with money: the very touch of it should be to them as the touch of the Evil One. But with the Cistercians, as things were, money was ever present.

One shrewdly suspects that whether it was talked of in chapter or not, the abbot and his principal officers were obliged to talk a great deal about money. It had to be found for building purposes, and for repairs, and for expenses. Of course, when the estates grew large, and much land was farmed out, and tenants were numbered by the hundred, money came in, in considerable bulk. But if it came in, it also went out. Figure to yourself what a medieval abbey really was—one established on the scale of Fountains, at any rate. Food, clothing, maintenance of all sorts for a community of men numbering, at one time, into the hundreds; the cost of keeping up vast estates; the giving away of charity to the poor; the paying of pensions; the entertainment of guests; the paying of interest on loans; and, no inconsiderable item, the defraying of law expenses. These were all ordinary items in the budget; there are many more ordinary items, it is obvious, which one need not particularize, because they are so obvious and can be thought of by any man who knows what it costs to run a big establishment or a great estate.

7. Exactions of the Crown.

But there were special drains on the houses. If one places a pot of sweet-stuff in the sun, one may be sure that the wasps will soon be gathered about it. Before the Cistercians had been established fifty years in England, men were talking of their wealth. Now in those days, whenever and wherever there was wealth in England, there was one institution which was going, by hook or by crook, to have as much of it as it could grasp and carry away with both hands. From the time in which the Cistercians had become owners of property, masters of flocks and herds, to the very end wherein they had to give up everything, the Crown always had an eye on their coffers. From Richard I to Henry VIII every English sovereign wanted his share—and took care to get it. Is money wanted for a ransom?—as in

the case of Richard—then the Cistercians must contribute so many thousands of sacks of wool. Is money needed to pay some ruffian band of foreign mercenaries? —let the Cistercians find more wool, or as much money as is equivalent to it—wool or money, specie or material, it matters little, so long as they pay. And they were always paying. The gross amount of taxation (usually forced) yielded up by the Order to the English Crown during the four hundred years of its existence must have been literally enormous.

8. Papal Exactions.

But there was not only the King. The Pope wanted his share, and as the Order was under his special protection, shielded by him from episcopal supervision and interference, he took care to get it. Perhaps he got more than the King got. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Pope got a good deal out of England: little wonder that England should in those times have been regarded as "the milch-cow of the papacy." There was the yearly tribute—the thousand marks at which it was fixed formed a very small and insignificant item in the whole schedule of the budget of papal exaction from this country. There were the Tallages—payments by the clergy to the Pope as feudal superior. In 1225 one prebend or manor in every cathedral was claimed; in 1229 a demand was made for a tenth of all ecclesiastical property in the kingdom. There were the Annates—firstfruits—a first year's entire clerical income; originally payable only in respect of benefices and preferments in the Pope's gift, this had gradually become applied to every bishopric and benefice in the land. Then there were the Papal Provisions, by which the papacy provided in advance a holder of whatever benefice next fell vacant. Such holders were often foreigners, who never came near the country, though they took good care to have agents in it who scrupulously exacted their dues. Ganulinus de Ossa, a cardinal,

who was nephew of Pope John XXII, at one time held the livings of Hackney, Hollingbourne, Pagham, and Lyminge, together with the prebend of Driffield in York Minster: this man drew from England no less than £1000 a year, equal to quite £20,000 of our money, and he also held important benefices in France—at Cahors, and at Rouen, and at Saintes and at Rheims. Then there was Peter's Pence—at first a voluntary offering, but by that time regarded by the papacy as its just due, and jealously extracted. More money went to Rome in prosecuting appeals. The Cistercians, judging by their records, must have laid out a great deal of their wealth in that way. First and last, money flowed out of the country to the papacy like water. "To such a pitch had the avarice of the Romans been allowed to grow," says Matthew Paris (Chron. Maj., Rolls Series, v. 355), "and such a point had it reached, that the Bishop of Lincoln, being struck with amazement at it, caused his clerks carefully to reckon and estimate all the revenues of foreigners in England, and it was discovered and found for truth that the present Pope, Innocent IV, had pauperized the whole Church more than all his predecessors from the time of the primitive papacy. The revenue of the alien clerks whom he had planted in England, and whom the Roman Church had enriched, amounted to more than 70,000 marks. The King's revenue could not be reckoned at more than a third part of the sum." Now and then even the abbots of the Orders specially protected by the Pope grumbled at and made some feeble resistance to the avaricious papal demands, but the fear of excommunication and interdict was too strong, and the money asked for was invariably paid.

9. The Corrodies.

The system of corrodies helped greatly in furthering the decline of the houses. It had often been resorted to by abbots who were in temporary need of ready

money: many abbots had in this way pledged the credit of the future for very little present gain. What was paid down by the corrodier was presently gone; then the corrodier had to be maintained for life; when the corrodies of an abbey were numerous (and in some abbeys the number of corrodiers and pensioners was far greater than that of the brotherhood) the yearly expense became serious. But there were other drawbacks in connexion with the system. The outdoor corrodiers—folk who fetched or had taken to them the rations which had been agreed upon—saw little of the community, but the indoor pensioners mixed more or less freely with them. Hence a certain breaking down of monastic discipline; the corrodiers demanded better accommodation, softer beds, easier seats, less Spartan simplicity in matters of food and drink; in many cases they encouraged the monks to rebel against the strict rule; altogether, as certain records show, it was not good for them to be in the house, especially under a lax and easygoing abbot. Here and there one finds evidence that the monks and the corrodiers gossiped together, that they joined each other in games, particularly in chess: simple things in themselves, no doubt, but not in accordance with the spirit of the cloister. Nevertheless the corrody system was kept up to a considerable extent, and there are numerous instances of a corrody being demanded as a right, notably by patrons who had given land to an abbey, and who accordingly considered themselves justified in planting pensioners upon it.

10. Appropriation of Benefices.

Much money was spent by the Order in acquiring rectorial tithes, when they held or could secure advowsons. It was necessary in all these cases to get the sanction of the Crown, and often the consent of the Pope; and some very curious reasons were given to the papal authorities by the various abbots in presenting

their petitions to be allowed to make these appropriations. One wants to repair his cloister; another to improve the church; a third candidly says they need better ale in their *frater*; a fourth wishes to be in a position to spend more money on visitors; a fifth pleads real poverty. As to the parish which is concerned in these dealings, the wishes of its folk are utterly ignored by abbot, bishop, king, and pope—the living is a mere pawn, to be bargained for. But if one goes by results the Order gained little, if anything, by these dealings in advowsons, and the expense incurred in putting them through was great. No better instance of what really took place when Cistercian abbeys appropriated livings can be found than that of Meaux and the livings of Easington and Keyingham, in the East Riding. These two livings passed into the hands of Meaux between 1339 and 1349, after several years' negotiations between the abbot, the rectors of Easington and Keyingham, the Abbot of Aumale in Normandy, the Archbishop of York, the Chapter of York, and the Pope—all of whom had interests at stake. The proceedings, as recorded in the chronicles, are instructive. First the Abbot of Meaux urged upon the Archbishop of York that the advowsons of Easington and Keyingham had been given by Edward I in exchange for Wyke and the manor of Wyton, and that Meaux had suffered great loss of land by erosion of the coast in that district, which losses could be made good if the community were permitted to appropriate these two churches. The archbishop held an inquiry: the result was favourable to Meaux; the churches were then incorporated "for perpetual possession for our own use and our successors." But now came in all those who had rights. Sir John de Bothby was Rector of Keyingham: he had to be bought out. Sir Hugh de Glanville was Rector of Easington: he, too, had to be compensated. But there were two preceding rectors who had some rights: they also wanted compensation. Amongst them, these four clergymen

made Meaux pay heavily: de Glanville, for instance, got a pension of 100 marks a year, and bound the community in £1000 to pay it. But this was not all. The Archbishop, Dean, and Chapter of York had rights which came to a considerable annual sum—that had to be arranged for. Then, the Abbot of Aumale drew a pension of 23*s.* a year from Easington, and another of 13*s.* 4*d.* from Keyingham: they had to guarantee to him that these should be paid. Also, the Provost of Beverley demanded 44 quarters of corn from Easington; 17½ quarters from Keyingham: they had to be arranged for. All this done, the convent appointed the first two vicars—the Vicar of Easington is to have 20 marks a year; his neighbour of Keyingham, £12. But now came in the papacy. There was some hitch in the proceedings—the Curia wanted to see the original documents. A monk of Meaux was sent all the way to Avignon, where the papacy was then quartered, with attested copies. That would not do; he had to travel home again to fetch the originals. Eventually, by bribing the Cardinal of St. Eustache and the Cardinal of St. Marcial with 200 florins each, and by giving another hundred to the Abbot of Citeaux, John de Bussières, who had just been raised to the cardinalate, the ambassador got his business done, and everything of Keyingham and Easington, two more or less obscure villages, belonged to Meaux.

11. Legal Expenses.

That financial troubles had a great deal to do with the decline in the Cistercian houses there can be no doubt. Some abbots were not fitted to deal with money matters; some were rash in building; some were improvident; some were personally extravagant. Far too much money was spent in lavish entertainment of great folk; occasionally, far too much was laid out by the abbot himself in his journeys, or, in the later times, in keeping up his dignity. But there were other reasons,

most of them having some connexion with money. "Abundance of money," said the Cellarer of Leicester in 1440, "is the cause of many evils." If the Cistercians had not had an abundance of money, or its equivalent, at one time, they would not have had to borrow money from the Jews. For when they had money they laid it out lavishly—at one period at any rate—and when money did not come in, they borrowed. Sometimes—let us hope not very often—they contrived by appeals to the Crown to get out of their indebtedness to the Jews, but they doubtless paid the sons of Israel large sums by way of interest. Still, not even the expenses consequent upon borrowing money could ever have involved the eight houses in such waste of wealth as resulted from the constant litigation. That was always going on—the records are full of it. Gasquet would have us believe that it was only "such as will happen between men of all classes," but it was more. The houses were always at law, not only with laymen, but with ecclesiastics, from bishops down to country parsons; nay, one house thought nothing of going to law with another house. "The rival interests of houses even of the same Order," remarks Mr. Capes, "led at times to most unedifying scenes. Disputed boundaries, or a no-man's land between neighbouring estates, uncertain rights of patronage, questions of the dues at fairs or market, these and the like caused long-standing disputes, coming to a climax now and then when sturdy monks gathered with their armed retainers to make good their claims with open show of violence and broken heads." Nor was this spirit of quarrelling confined to litigation and to contests with outsiders. There is abundant evidence to show that faction and disorder were not at all unknown within the communities. Meaux once more furnishes a notable example—in the discord and intrigue which was rampant there in 1353.

12. The Black Death.

Yet we are not to think that all the causes which led to the decline and failure of the Cistercians came from within. From an economic standpoint the communities suffered severely from the visitation commonly known as the Black Death—suffered so much, indeed, that their material prosperity became affected in a fashion from which it never really recovered. A form of plague—"the most horrible which the world ever witnessed," Green calls it—swept over Europe from South to North in 1348, and at the close of the year made its appearance in this country. Its effects were such as we can now scarcely conceive. The population at that time did not exceed, at the outside, three and a half millions: of these, at least one-half was swept away. In the towns, where there was no drainage and people lived under unsanitary conditions, the ravages were of a terrible nature. In London, fifty thousand corpses were interred in one burial-ground, on the site of which was afterwards built the Charterhouse. Sixty thousand people are said to have died at Norwich, then one of the most thickly populated towns in the county; at Bristol "the living were hardly able to bury the dead." In East Anglia the ravages of the disease were particularly dreadful. Dr. Jessopp calculates that eight hundred of the beneficed clergy of that district died in 1349. The Court Rolls of East Anglia show that there were immense numbers of properties left absolutely ownerless in that part of the country—there was no one left living who could claim them. So, in perhaps a lesser degree, was it all over the land. "Sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn," says a contemporary writer; "there were none left who could drive them." Religious processions walked the streets, imploring the Divine mercy. At Hereford the shrine of St. Cantilupe was regularly carried through the city in hopes that it might avert the dreaded visitation. And at this time appeared

the Brothers of the Cross, or Flagellants, who perambulated the towns, singing penitential psalms and litanies, and scourging themselves as they walked. All over the land men waited in despair, fearing that the hand of death might be laid upon them at any moment: to most folk it was as if the Last Day had dawned.

13. Ravages in Yorkshire.

The plague broke out in Yorkshire early in 1349, and raged for some months with great violence. Thousands of deaths occurred in York; according to certain old documents, three-fourths of the entire population of the city must have succumbed. In the archdeaconry of the West Riding there were ninety-six deaths amongst the clergy; in the East Riding, sixty incumbents died out of ninety-five. One of the victims was Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, author of the *Pricke of Conscience*. In all the more populous towns the scenes were repeated which had already become familiar in London, and in Norwich, and in Bristol. And at Meaux, always the most unfortunate of the Cistercian abbeys of the county, the ravages were particularly dreadful. At the beginning of August 1349, Meaux had a community of forty-two monks and seven lay-brothers; at the end of the month twenty-three monks and six lay-brothers were dead. At one time, the abbot, Hugo or Hugh de Leven, and five monks lay dead together within the house. In the end not a lay-brother was left, and thirty-two monks were dead, and the ten survivors were faced with an altered condition of things. "The greater part of the tenants were dead," writes Mr. Earle, describing the state of affairs at Meaux; "rents were not paid, crops lay rotted on the ground, stock had perished, for there had been no one to gather in the harvest, no one to water or feed the animals; the future was gloomy, no one remained to begin the autumn ploughing. Tenants who were not dead were ruined."

14. Effect on the Order.

As it was at Meaux, so it was with the other monastic communities. The effect of the Black Death on these communities generally is so ably and concisely summed up by Mr. Capes (*History of the English Church*, iii, 81–82) that one cannot do better than carefully repeat and closely consider what he says: "Another result of the great plague was a general falling off in the number of the inmates and the means of the religious houses. Many of these had been in dire financial straits before. They had overbuilt themselves, or mismanaged their affairs, or fallen into the hands of moneylenders, when the liberal gifts of pious founders ceased to flow. The pestilence thinned their numbers and so lessened their expenses, but it greatly crippled them in other ways. They had lived upon the produce of their lands, but now labour became scarce and dear, and the profits of their half-cultivated manors disappeared. In their estates . . . another system began to be adopted. Instead of the old capitalist cultivator, with a bailiff on each large estate, tenant farming before long was introduced. . . . The change was a gradual one, of course; some tried to struggle on, but the profits which had been once made under the old system . . . had almost disappeared, and at last the bailiff was replaced by the tenant farmer. . . . For the character and the reputation of the monks themselves it was unfortunate that they should be thus wholly divorced from the active cares of agricultural life. They had long ago forsaken the manual labour prescribed in their own interest by the old Benedictine rule; the improved methods of their model farms, the new experiments and importations, the successful sheep-breeding of the Cistercian houses, were mainly matters of the past, but at least while they held the estates in their own hands the management and supervision provided varied work for the energetic members of their body. When that

was given up too many of them were left with little but their time upon their hands, and as their spiritual zeal visibly declined there was more likelihood that their neighbours would regard them as a mere encumbrance."

15. Some Contemporary Opinions. Chaucer.

What was the opinion of the "neighbour" of this period? We know well enough what was said of the monastic communities by Wyclif and his followers, and by the Lollards, and by certain other folk, who, like them, were sorely prejudiced and biased. Of such sayings we need take no more heed than one commonly gives to partisan statements. But what was the opinion of men of repute, upon whose views we can rely with some amount of assurance and confidence? There are four men to whom we can turn—Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, Walter Map, Gerald de Barri. They were all good Churchmen, sound, devoted: each, in varying degree, was what one would call a man of the world in the sense that they knew life and could judge men; each was shrewd, observant, a good judge of character. If it is objected that Chaucer was a poet, and wrote with poetic licence and exaggeration, it should be remembered that Chaucer was also a man of affairs and of business; one who had mixed much in contemporary society, been concerned in financial matters; one who was, in short, a prominent civil servant of his day. Now in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer sketches a monk for us—such a monk as he doubtless knew by the score. What sort of picture is it? His monk is one that loves venery; he is a manly man, able to be an abbot; he has many a good horse in his stable; when he rides, men may hear his bridle jingle; he cares nothing for the text which says that a monk out of his cloister is as a fish out of water; he cares less for study; he is all for going coursing with his greyhounds, and he spares no cost to prick after the

hare; his sleeves are purfled, and his hood is fastened with a gold pin which is ornamented with a love-knot; underneath his bald head he carries a plump face; in all he is "full fat and in good point." Does any one suppose that the first readers of the *Canterbury Tales* did not chuckle to themselves as they recognized the fidelity of this portrait?

16. William Langland.

William Langland was a poor clerk in minor orders "earning a scanty pittance probably in church choir or scrivener's office, with little reverence for lords and ladies, or the proud emblems of official pomp," but with keen eyes for the abuses which he saw all around him. No man who was not possessed of intimate knowledge of the contemporary state of affairs could have written as he did; no man who did not possess unusual powers of observation and judgment could have filled in those details which make his picture so convincing. What has he to say? He holds up pope, cardinals, bishops, clergy, monks, friars to contempt, and tells us plainly why. He brings a clear accusation against the monks of his day. They have departed from their ideal; they have broken the constitutions of their Orders; they falsify religion; they are actuated by self-love, pride, and covetousness. And—whether he meant it or not—he falls into prophecy:

> There shall come a king
> And confess you religious,
> And beat you, as scripture tells,
> For breaking your rule.

17. Walter Map.

Walter Map was one of the most brilliant men of his time. He was a scholar, a poet, a theologian, a diplomatist, an ambassador; he was Canon of St. Paul's; Precentor of Lincoln; Archdeacon of Oxford. He knew

men thoroughly, and monks not least. What has he to say of the monks of his time, and especially of the Cistercians who had departed from the good institutions of their founders?

> Worse than a monk there is no friend nor sprite in hell;
> Nothing so covetous, nor more strange to be known;
> For if you give him aught, he may possess it well,
> But if you ask him aught, then nothing is his own.

18. Giraldus Cambrensis.

Gerald de Barri, better known to readers of old books as Giraldus Cambrensis, was Archdeacon of St. David's, a man who knew much of ecclesiastical life in many centres, a keen observer, a deep student of human nature. He, too, has something to say about the degeneracy of the Cistercians. "The Cistercian Order," he writes, "at first deserved praise and commendation from its adhering voluntarily to the original vows of poverty and sanctity: until ambition, the blind mother of mischief, was introduced . . . although [the Cistercians] are possessed of fine buildings, with ample revenues and estates, they will soon be reduced to poverty and destruction . . . sooner than lessen the number of one of the thirteen or fourteen dishes which they claim by right of custom, or even in a time of scarcity or famine recede in the smallest degree from their accustomed good fare, they would suffer the richest lands and the best buildings of the monastery to become a prey to usury, and the numerous poor to perish before their gates."

19. The Ten Abuses.

On one of the old choir-stalls of St. Agatha's Abbey at Easby, now in the parish church of Richmond, there is an inscription: *Decem sunt abusiones claustralium.* The abuses were ten—Costly Living; Choice Food; Noise in Cloister; Strife in Chapter; Disorder in Quire; a Neglectful Disciple; a Disobedient Youth; a Lazy

Old Man; a Headstrong Monk; a Worldly Religious. It is impossible to deny that when three hundred years had gone since the foundation of the eight Yorkshire houses, these various abuses were not frequently found amongst the Cistercians. The old austerity was dead; the old simplicity scorned. We may properly acquit the monks of the graver moral charges so prodigally brought against them: there is no good evidence on which they could be found guilty. But discipline had become relaxed; the first enthusiasm was lost; the first principles were a memory, if they were even that. The body corporate was there, but the soul was asleep or dead. Yet still throughout that fifteenth century the outward show of monasticism was preserved. The bells rang out from Fountains and Rievaulx, Kirkstall and Byland; the services were performed with greater pomp and more elaborate ritual than ever; the abbot kept his state, the brethren lived lives of gentle quietude in the cloister; rents came in from the far-flung lands; there were difficulties and embarrassments and the eternal litigation, but the system still existed. It was old and venerable by then, and in the North of England, at any rate, there were few men who wished to see it die. Neither Wyclif nor the Lollards had made much impression in Yorkshire, and the folk were still in sympathy with the old things and the old ways: Fountains, a monument of magnificence, looked as if it could never fall. But already the hand of the destroyer was being made ready to his task.

CHAPTER VII

THE TIME-SPIRIT

1. The Impulse to Reform.

While changes—not for the better—had taken place amongst the monastic Orders, changes had also taken place amongst men in their ideas of the relative positions of Church and State. Once upon a time whoever had dared, in the name of the State, to lay his hand upon the Church, would have been met with a stern "Touch not mine Anointed!" But during the fifteenth century men's minds experienced certain illuminating and disturbing experiences. The iniquities and exactions of the medieval popes, the effects of the Great Schism, the wickedness which marked ecclesiastical life and conduct all over Europe, the growing impulse to nationalism, or, as we should now call it, self-determination, which was increasing by leaps and bounds in England, impelled men to take a new view of Church government. As the new learning spread, men began to ask themselves whether the sanctity which had hung around the Church was as real a thing as it had been supposed to be. They began to use eyes and ears, and to reflect on what they heard and saw. And once having begun to look and listen, they were not slow to see and consider the palpable abuses which were thick on every side. Prominent amongst these was the state of the monasteries. It is a popular error to believe that nothing was done in the way of reform of the monastic Orders until the drastic measures under Henry VIII reformed them once for all by sweeping them out of existence. For

reform had been going on for more than a hundred years before the events of 1536–40, and it had originated not only in the minds of statesmen, but in those of Churchmen. Its necessity, indeed, was too obvious to be longer neglected.

2. The Alien Priories.

The active proceedings in the reform of the religious houses may be said to have begun in 1414, when the alien priories were handed over to the Crown, to be dealt with in future according to the sovereign's pleasure. For a long time the alien priories had been the fruitful cause of much discontent and annoyance. They were merely dependencies of foreign abbeys ; not seldom they were ruled by foreigners. They paid tribute to mother-houses on the Continent. Of those in Yorkshire, Allerton Mauleverer was a cell attached to the house of Marmoutier, near Tours ; Burstall belonged to Aumale, in Normandy ; Ecclesfield was dependant on St. Wandragasille, near Rouen ; Grosmont originated from Grandimont. Parliament was constantly asked to hear complaints of the considerable sums of money which were being sent out of the country by these alien houses to the foreign mother-houses. More complaints, in another issue, came from the bishops, who, little as their powers were recognized by the priories, had good opportunities of judging of the general laxity and incompetence of their rulers and of their abuse of the rights of patronage. More than once during repeated occasions, caused by foreign wars, the Crown had seized on their funds and estates and made the inmates remove from those houses which were situate near the coast. Stubbs says that the possessions of these priories had always been in a precarious position from the time of the wars under Edward III. But the houses were still in existence at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when, on the petition of the House of Commons, they were handed over to the King in perpetuity. Their immediate fate

was not that of extinction. Some, by the payment of a considerable fine, were allowed to rank with the native convents; others were annexed to houses, already in existence, which were in need of financial help; in certain cases the lands were farmed out to holders who paid their rents direct to the Treasury. Two well-known educational institutions owe much to the Crown's absorption of these properties—Eton, and All Soul's College at Oxford.

3. The Selborne Case.

The process of reformation continued—it had, indeed, commenced before the case of the alien priories. For some time the bishops had been complaining of the abuses and irregularities which existed in many of the religious houses. Some of them were bankrupt. Many were tenanted by but a very few inmates. Most of those of which complaint was made were being hopelessly mismanaged. The bishops kept obtaining licences to close such houses altogether. In some instances the inmates were transferred to other houses. When there was any poor shred of endowment left, it was diverted to worthier purposes, usually to education. A notable instance of such a suppression is that of the Augustinian Priory of Selborne in Hampshire, of which there is a full account in Gilbert White's famous work. This, founded by Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, about 1232, had by 1387 so fallen away into irregularity that William of Wykeham, then bishop of the See, sent special commissioners to inquire into its state, and subsequently issued a series of injunctions to the prior, which, as given in the *Notabilis Visitatio de Seleburne*, show how some monastic houses were being conducted at that time. The services were not kept up. Suspected and disorderly females frequented the cloister. The canons were ignorant and illiterate. They were given to wandering. They were so lost to decency that they slept naked in their beds. They went sporting and

coursing, and publicly attended hunting-matches. They were allowing the monastic property to fall into neglect: most of it was notoriously dilapidated. They had grievously burthened the priory by granting corrodies. They were remiss in giving alms. They were wearing garments edged with costly furs, fringed gloves, and silken girdles trimmed with gold and silver. The sacramental plate, the altar cloths and the surplices were in an uncleanly and disgusting condition. They had pawned not only plate and vestments, but the relics of the saints. We need go no further than that. There was much more, but the last offence is sufficient: when monks begin pawning relics of holy men it is evident that they have lost all sense of decency as well as of fitness. No doubt William of Wykeham thought so, too; nevertheless, being of a kindly and fatherly nature, he was indulgent to these wicked Augustinians, giving them not only much excellent advice, but actually paying their debts for them and leaving them 100 marks in his will. It was all of no avail. They persisted in their evil courses—so much so that their conduct was noised abroad as far as Rome: in 1417 Pope Martin V sent them a sharp message. They paid no more heed to the Pope than they had given to the bishop, and in 1462, William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, sequestrated their estates. Even that did no good, and in 1485, with the approval of the Pope, he suppressed Selborne Priory altogether, and gave what remained of its property to Magdalen College at Oxford, which he had founded some years previously.

4. Wymondham and Walsingham.

It is a great mistake to think that popes and bishops did nothing towards the reform of the religious houses: in that fifteenth century they did a great deal, only to find themselves faced with the difficulties which always confront any one who endeavours to disturb vested interests. Selborne Priory was not the only house with

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which William of Wykeham had difficulty: his injunctions and censures to the ancient abbey of Hyde (formally called Newminster, and founded by Edward the Elder, son of Alfred the Great, in 901) were serious and lengthy. According to the visitation reports of the diocese of Norwich in the fifteenth century, the condition of the houses in East Anglia was deplorable: those of Wymondham and Walsingham (one a Benedictine house, the other an Augustinian) were particularly notorious. Of Wymondham the report is that in the entire course of its existence, nothing good can be said of it. Of Walsingham the evidence is worse. The prior is living a dissolute and scandal-giving life. He has robbed the treasury of jewels and money. He keeps a professional jester. He is believed to have an illicit connexion with the wife of one of his serving-men. He behaves towards his fellow-religious with violence and brutality. They themselves are given, as one would expect, to dissipation and quarrelling; there is scarcely the pretence of religion amongst them: they frequent the town taverns; they are so fond of drink that they have broken into the prior's cellar and stolen his wine; they frequently sit up all night drinking; they go hunting and hawking. And, naturally, the boys in the school connected with the house are mutinous, and will not learn; and the servants are insolent and rebellious, and do their work as they list.

5. St. Albans.

All this was bad enough, but it was as nothing in comparison with a case brought to the notice of the authorities at Rome towards the end of the century. For some time the condition of things at the great Benedictine house of St. Albans had been so bad that it had become a notorious, public scandal. Gasquet, in his book on *The Greater Abbeys of England*, dismisses the episode lightly, hinting that politics lay at the root of the complaints brought against the house, and that

as the abbot was merely admonished and not turned out, the evidence against him cannot have been proved. But the evidence is clear enough, and that the abbot was permitted to retain his governorship only shows once more how difficult it is to interfere with vested interests. Nor should it be forgotten that in this case, as in those of William of Wykeham and Selborne, and the Bishop of Norwich and Walsingham, there is no question of falsification, design, or prejudice, such as certainly arose in the affairs of 1536–40, when foul charges were deliberately invented against innocent communities by Cromwell and his agents. In these fifteenth-century cases the charges were the result of careful episcopal examination of evidence. In the case of St. Albans the charges were brought by the Papal Legate, John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England, Legate of the Apostolic See, who was expressly charged by Pope Innocent VIII to inquire into the reports which had been placed before the Roman Curia as to the state of things existing at the famous abbey which ranked so high amongst the English Benedictine houses, and possessed cells at several places, and notably at Belvoir, Hertford, Pembroke, Binham, and Wallingford, and even as far north as Tynemouth. Now the charges of Archbishop Morton, in his capacity of Papal Legate, are explicit. He does not say that he has merely heard of these matters as rumours, vaguenesses, which may or may not be true; he says they are "publicly notorious"; "brought before us upon *the testimony of witnesses worthy of credit*"; all through his series of terrible charges he does not say "you are said to have"; instead, evidently having no doubt in the matter himself, he uses the term "you *have*." And what were the charges? Far worse than any brought by Layton or Lee fifty years later, though they were as bad as their crafty and malicious minds could invent. They are worth all the more consideration because of the fact that Morton was acting for the papacy: all

history tells us that the papacy, as a governing power, will move heaven and earth to avoid scandal. But here it was impossible to avoid scandal: the scandal was flaming on every house-top in the neighbourhood. And so the archbishop tells the abbot what he has done—not what he is charged with doing, but what, according to unassailable evidence, he has actually committed, and allowed his monks to commit. It is not good reading, but there it is, and no excuse can wipe it out. First of all, the abbot is notoriously guilty of simony, usury, and dilapidation of the goods of the community. The measure and form of religious life have become relaxed. Hospitality and almsgiving are neglected. The ancient rule of the Order is deserted. Not a few of the brethren are leading lives of lasciviousness—nay, are not afraid "to defile the holy places by infamous intercourse with nuns." The abbot himself has admitted a notorious harlot, one Elena Germyn, to be a nun in the priory of Pray, within the jurisdiction; one of his monks, Father Thomas Sudbury, is publicly and notoriously associating with her: other monks of St. Albans resort to the same place, "as to a public brothel." A similar state of things exists at Sapwell. All this is bad, but there is worse—if that is possible—to follow. Let us give it in the Papal Legate's own words, taking particular note of the positiveness and directness of the charges. "You have dilapidated the common property; you have made away with the jewels; the copses, the woods, the underwood, almost all the oaks and other forest trees, to the value of eight thousand marks and more, you have made to be cut down without distinction, and they have by you been sold and alienated. The brethren of the abbey neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without. Some of them, who are covetous of honour and promotion, and desirous of pleasing your cupidity, have stolen and made away with the chalices and other jewels of

the church. They have even sacrilegiously extracted the precious stones from the very shrine of St. Alban; and you have not punished these men, but have rather knowingly supported and maintained them. If any of your brethren be living justly and religiously, if any be wise and virtuous, these you straightway depress and hold in hatred." There is more of it, but this is sufficient. Let it be remembered that Archbishop Morton was a remarkably astute and clever man, the personal friend of an exceptionally clever king—Henry VII—and that before ever he set down these charges against a powerful abbot, who was also a peer of the realm, and took precedence of the bishops, he would take good care to make sure that they were true in substance and in fact. In the whole history of the bad features of English monasticism, the St. Albans case stands out as pre-eminently the worst, and it is a good thing that the inquiry into it was directed by express orders from Rome: it will for ever bear the stamp and seal of papal direction. Yet, in this case, little was done. The abbot was admonished to set his house in order. At an earlier period, Grosseteste, when Bishop of Lincoln, had deposed many heads of houses for far less serious breaches of discipline, but Morton, despite his unqualified phraseology, evidently considered that the offender would be properly punished by censure, and so left him to reform.

6. Wolsey.

But now came upon the scene a reformer of a different stamp—the man who, had things gone better with him, might have reformed the Church to such purpose, and in such thorough and efficient manner, that the whole course of subsequent history might have been altered, and all the troubles of the last four centuries avoided. In all Europe there was no man who could have so reformed and restored and rebuilt as Thomas Wolsey could, had it been permitted him to carry out the task to which, without doubt, he set his mind from an early

period of his career. We have all become so accustomed to the conventional picture of Wolsey, so used to Shakespeare's travesty of him, as to forget the real history and real significance of his life and character. Few greater Englishmen have ever lived: few have been more misunderstood. "Not without reason," says Creighton, "has the story of Wolsey's fall passed into a parable of the heartlessness of the world. For Wolsey lived for the world as few men have ever done; not for the larger world of intellectual thought or spiritual aspiration, but for the actual, immediate world of affairs. He limited himself to its problems, but within its limits he took a wider and juster view of the problems of his time than any English statesman has ever done. For politics in the largest sense, comprising all the relations of the nation at home and abroad, Wolsey had a capacity which amounted to genius, and it is doubtful if this can be said of any other Englishman. There have been many capable administrators, many excellent organizers, many who bravely faced the difficulties of their time, many who advocated particular reforms and achieved definite results. But Wolsey aimed at doing all these things together and more. Taking England as he found her, he aimed at developing all her latent possibilities, and leaving Europe to follow in her train. . . . He was the last English statesman of the old school, which regarded England not as a separate nation, but as an integral part of Western Christendom. He did not look upon questions as being solely English questions; he did not aim merely at reforming English monasteries or asserting a new position for the English Church. But he thought that England was ripe for practically carrying out reforms which had long been talked of, and remedying abuses which had long been lamented; and he hoped that England in these respects would serve as a model to the rest of Europe."

7. His Probable Ambition.

Many writers have accused Wolsey of scheming for the papacy: Bishop Creighton believes that he was honest when he affirmed that he was not greatly anxious for it. But he was certainly anxious for the full legatine powers which he got, dreaming perhaps of "a future in which the Roman pontiff would practically resign his claims over the northern churches to an English delegate, who might become his equal or superior in actual power." And having been endowed with his special legatine powers he without doubt contemplated and partly set about the reform of the English Church by a combination of ecclesiastical and royal authority. The time seemed ripe. "The rising middle class," says Creighton, "had many grievances to complain of from the ecclesiastical courts; the new landlords looked with contempt on the management of monastic estates; the new learning mocked at the ignorance of the clergy, and scoffed at the superstitions of a simpler past which had survived unduly into an age when criticism was coming into fashion. The power of the Church had been great in days when the State was rude and the clergy were the natural leaders of men. Now the State was powerful and enjoyed men's confidence; they looked to the King to satisfy their material aspirations, and the Church had not been very successful in keeping their spiritual aspirations alive. . . . There was a general desire to see a readjustment of many matters in which the Church was concerned."

8. The Standish Affair.

An incident which occurred in 1515 showed which way the wind was blowing in this matter of reform. Four years previously Parliament had passed an Act which did away with sanctuary and benefit of clergy in the case of those accused of murder: this was felt to be a dangerous innovation by some old-fashioned

Churchmen, and when Parliament met in 1515 the Abbot of Winchcombe preached a sermon before it in which he denounced the Act as an impious measure. The King wisely submitted the question to a commission of noblemen and clergy. During their discussion, Standish, Warden of the Friars Minor, put his finger on the true point: the Act, he said, was not against the liberties of the Church, but for the welfare of the whole realm. The opposing party replied that it was contrary to the decretals. Standish was quick with a pertinent retort—so, he said, was the non-residence of bishops, but that was common enough. Then the clerical party fell back upon texts of Holy Scripture: Standish beat them at their own game. The temporal lords who sat on the commission and formed the majority, decided in favour of the Act, and ordered the Abbot of Winchcombe to apologize for his sermon. Then the bishops turned on Standish and summoned him before Convocation: Standish appealed to the Crown. Once more Henry appointed a commission, the members of which eventually put forth the significant decision that the King could hold a Parliament without the spiritual peers, who, indeed, had no right there save by reason of their temporal possessions: moreover, they said, Convocation by proceeding against a royal commissioner, had rendered itself liable to the penalties of præmunire. Henry had the bishops before him and "read them a lesson"; Wolsey was the only one who, says Creighton, saw the seriousness of the occasion. He knelt before the King, interceded for the clergy, declared that they designed nothing against the royal prerogative, but were only anxious for the rights of the Church, and begged that the question might be referred to the Pope. But even then, years before the break with Rome, Henry would have nothing to do with papal intervention in such a matter. "We are by God's grace," said he, "King of England, and have no superior but God; we will maintain the rights of the Crown like our predecessor: your

decrees you break and interpret at your pleasure; but we will not consent to your interpretation any more than our predecessors have done." The bishops heard—and "went their way in silence."

9. Wolsey as Reformer.

What were Wolsey's ideas of reform? Creighton summarizes them in a passage which we may advantageously epitomize. He knew that the position of the Church was precarious; that it would have to give way. He wished it to give way with dignity; to be pliant; so that it might gain time for carrying out gradual reform. His ideas of reform were more those of a statesman than of an ecclesiastic. The Church was too wealthy and too powerful for the work it was doing. In former times it had done the work of the State; now the State was strong enough to do its own work. The institutions which had once been useful were useful no longer. Monasticism, as it had existed of late, had had its day. Its tenure of land at a time when commercial competition was becoming increasingly active was viewed with jealousy; as great landholders the monks must go. But he did not deceive himself about the practical difficulties in the way of reform, he knew how closely the ecclesiastical system was interwoven with English society; he knew the strength of the system. The first reform to be carried out must be in the direction of raising the standard of clerical intelligence. And so he set himself "to divert some of the revenues of the Church from the maintenance of idle and ignorant monks to the education of a body of learned clergy."

10. The Papal Bull, 1524.

In 1524 Wolsey obtained from Pope Clement VII powers which enabled him to suppress the monastery of St. Frideswide in Oxford, and to devote its revenues to the founding of a college: soon afterwards he secured

a Bull which enabled him to close all English religious houses possessing fewer than seven inmates. This seemed a very small and a very reasonable matter, yet it was unpopular amongst the folk of that day, for many felt it to be the beginning of worse things, and there were some who foresaw the sure and inevitable end: it was as Fuller remarks—the measure made "the forest of religious foundations in England to shake, justly fearing that the king would fell the oaks when the cardinal had begun to cut the underwood." "It would, perhaps," says Creighton, "have required too much wisdom for the monks to see that submission to the cardinal's pruning-knife was the only means of averting the clang of the royal axe." Wolsey used his pruning-knife during the next four years. Between 1524 and 1528 he suppressed twenty-nine of the smaller houses—one house of the Premonstratensians; three of the Cluniacs; fourteen of the Augustinian canons; eight of the Benedictines; and three of the Benedictine nuns. One of the nunneries was that of Pray, or St. Mary de Pratis, which had gained such unholy and unsavoury notoriety at the time of the St. Albans scandal; another was the priory of Littlemore, near Oxford, where Newman, three hundred years later, set up a semi-monastic institution as a place of retreat for himself and a chosen band of followers. Each of these twenty-nine houses had, of course, but a very few inmates at the time of its suppression.

11. Rumburgh.

One of the houses thus suppressed was a cell at Rumburgh in Suffolk, belonging to the great Benedictine abbey of St. Mary's at York, and in September 1528, the abbot, Edmund Whalley (1521–30), wrote a long letter to Wolsey about the whole matter, which is printed by Mr. Clay in the *Suppression Papers of the Yorkshire Monasteries*, and forms a singularly instructive and significant document.

September 20, 1528

Pleaseth your grace to understaunde, that I, your pore oratour, have lately receyvid certen lettres frome our priour of Romeburgh, with other of our brethren there beinge, by whose purpote I perceyve that your graces pleasure ys to suppresse the said priorye of Romeburgh, and also to unite, annex, and improper the same unto the churche of St. Peters in Ipiswiche ; and for the accomplishment of the same, as they wryte unto me, your officers came to the said priory the xjth day of the present moneth ; and there, after the redinge of certen lettres, commissional not onely of your grace, but also of our holy father, the pope, and of our soveraigne lorde the kynge, for the same purpose directed, intered into the same priory, and that done, toke away as well as the goodes moveable of the said priory, beinge a membre of our monastery, and gyven unto us by Alen Niger, summe tyme erele of Richemound and our secounde refounder, by whose gyfte next unto the kinge's grace we have had moost benefyttes, laundes, and profettes gyven us, by reason whereof we be most notably charged with massez, suffragies, and other almouse dedes for hys benefittes to us most charytably exhibite, bot also certen munimentes, evidences, and specialities, tochinge and apperteynynge unto our monastery, which we had lately sent unto our said priour and brethren there, for the tryall of certen laundes and rightus which lately did depende betwixt us and certen men of worshipp in Cambridge shyre in contraversie, and yet doith depende undecised, and for none other purpose. In consideracion wherefore, yf yt might please your grace, forasmuch as we have a greate parte of our laundes graunted unto us by reason of the said Alen Niger, whereby we be daily charged as doith appere by comparicion made betwixt us and the said Alen Niger, and also confirmed by Boniface the iijth *anno sui pont tercio* under certen censures and paynes with clausis dirogatorye, as most largely by hys said graunte doith appere, that the said pryory might consiste and abyde as a membre unto our monastery, as yt haith done this thre hundred years and more, with your grace's favour, your grace shall not onely put me and my brether to a greate quietude, bot also take away many sundry doubties and greate perels of the residew of our laundes graunted unto us by the said erele which be right notable, yf the same suppression or alienation no farther procede ; and besydes that, ministre unto us a more notable acte than ye

had gyven us ten tymes more laundes than unto the same priory doth apperteyne and belonge ; for of truth the rents and revenuez unto the same priory belonging doith very lyttill surmounte the sum of xxx*ti* sterlinge, as far as I perceyve. And yet towardes your speciale, honourable, and laudable purpose concernynge the erection and foundacion of the said college and school, I am right intensly contented, for your tenderinge of the premisses to gyve unto your grace ccc markes sterlinge, which shall be deliverd unto your grace immediately. Most hummely desyring your grace to accept my pore mynde towardes your most noble acte, which should be far better yf that my lytell pore [estate] thereunto wolde extende, protestinge ever that yf your grace's pleasure be to have the said priory to the purpose above recyted, that then with all my study, diligence, and labour, I shall continually indever my self for the accompleshment of the same, accordengly as my dutie ys. Trustinge ever that your grace will se our pore monastery no further hyndred, bot that we may in tyme commyng lyve lyke religiouse men, and serve Almighty God with our nombre determinate, and hereafter avoide both in law and good conscience all perells that thereby may ensue ; and also pray for our founders, benefactours, and your good grace, accordingly to the foundacion of our monastery, as our dutie ys ; and so knowith Jhesus, who preserve your most noble grace in high honour and greate prosperytie long to continew. Frome our monastery of Yourke the xxth day of Septembre.

Your most bounden bedeman,

Edmond, Abbot of Yourke

12. Wolsey and East Anglia.

Put into a few words, the abbot's letter means this—if Wolsey will leave Rumburgh alone, he will give him three hundred marks. Wolsey doubtless got many such letters and offers : in some places, and notably at Bayham, in Sussex, his action in suppressing these small foundations was much resented by the surrounding populations. But he was not the man to be turned from any purpose taken in hand, and the suppression continued, and would doubtless have been considerably extended but for the event of 1529. In the interval which elapsed between the granting of the Pope's Bull and Wolsey's

fall, the reformer did good service by devoting the proceeds of the suppression to education. His plan was to build and endow a great college in his old university of Oxford, and another in his native place, Ipswich. That of Ipswich was doubtless intended to benefit the youth of East Anglia, for which part of the kingdom Wolsey seems to have cherished considerable affection. That its folk held him in great estimation and were minded to do him honour, seems to be proved by an old record in one of the town books of King's Lynn, in Norfolk, which is worth quoting, as showing how great ecclesiastics were entreated in those days by prosperous corporations: "*Memorandum* that the Monday the xx*ti* day of August in the xii*th* year of the reigne of Kyng Henry the VIII*ti*, the tyme of Robert Gerves, Mayer of Lenn, the Most Reverent Father in God Thomas Lord Cardynall Legate a Latere Archebysshope of York, Primate and Chaunceller of England, with the Bysshope of Ely and a Bysshope of Ireland, with many knyghtes and esquyers com to Lenn. Which Lord Cardynall was met on the caunsey beyond Gaywood Bridge with the Mayer and Commons of Lenn. Which Lord Cardynall was presented at Halynns Place with xx*ti* dosen brede, vi soys of ale, xv barelles of beer, a tonn and xii galon of wine, ii oxen, xx*ti* shepe, x signettes, xii capons, iii botores [bitterns], iii shorrlerdes [spoonbills], xiii plovers, viii pykes, and iii tenches, and on the next Wednsday after the seyd Lord Cardynall with the forseyd Bisshops, knightes, and esquyers departed, and the forseyd Mayer and Commonaltye brought the seyd Lord Cardynall beyound Hardewyk churche and ther departed from the seyd Lord Cardynall with great laude and thankes.—*Summa Totalis*: xxii*ti*. vi*d*., payd for the charges of the seyd present, with rewardes given to diverse officers of the seyd Lord Cardynall." Perhaps Wolsey had good treatment of this sort in mind when he designed to do something at Ipswich for the youth of Suffolk and Norfolk.

But his college at Ipswich came to nothing, falling when he fell, and no man took up his work.

13. Christ Church, Oxford.

With his scheme at Oxford he had some prosperity, and saw the beginnings of a mighty institution which under other hands than his developed into the Christ Church that stands before modern eyes. Around Cardinal College, as he intended it should be called, Wolsey meant to gather the new life of the university. The new impulses, the new learning, the freshening of intellectual movement were welcome to him; while other men of his age stood aloof, or openly opposed, Wolsey was well inclined, knowing that the world moves forward and will not be stayed in its course. He was, says Creighton, "well adapted to hold the balance between the old and the new learning. He had been trained in the theology of the schools, and was a student of St. Thomas Aquinas; but he had learned by the training of life to understand the new ideas; he grasped their importance, and he foresaw their triumph. He was a friend of the band of English scholars who brought to Oxford the study of Greek, and he sympathized with the intellectual aspirations of Grocyn, Colet, More, and Erasmus." Wolsey, as we know, intended to completely reorganize the teaching systems of both Oxford and Cambridge, and to provide both universities with professors drawn from amongst the first scholars of Europe, but here again his fall put an end to his schemes, as had happened at Ipswich, and as happened in Oxford in respect to his college. Nevertheless, he set Cardinal College on a sure foundation, intending that its purpose should be civil as well as ecclesiastical, and at his fall, when all his many possessions suffered confiscation, he pleaded for nothing so much or earnestly as that his work at Oxford should be spared and carried to completion.

14. Wolsey's Possibilities.

That Wolsey would have seriously carried out his work of reform in the Church had time and opportunity been allowed him, we cannot doubt any more than that he seriously intended to put the monastic institutions on a new footing. It would be idle to speculate on how far his reforms would have gone, but we may hazard the supposition that knowing life as he did, and recognizing that monasticism must always have its place in the Christian economy, he would never have swept the religious houses completely out of existence, but rather would have considerably reduced their numbers, relieved them of their superabundance of material possessions, and insisted on their return to the original conditions of the various rules. Wolsey knew that while men are men there will always be those amongst us to whom the monastic life appeals. Such men are with us in this twentieth century; such men will always be with us; they have their rights, as citizens, to cultivate their inclinations, to go apart, to live the life of the cloister—so long as they do no harm to the State. The communities of Wolsey's time were doing infinite harm to the State and to the Church by their over-possession of land, and their perversion from their original purpose; he probably saw their danger more than he ever revealed, and it is likely that had he been permitted to exercise his rule as Archbishop of York, his actions in the Northern Province would have prevented much, if not all, of what followed upon his arrest at Cawood.

15. Wolsey in the North.

When Wolsey was bidden to go to his diocese from Richmond Lodge, whither he had removed from the damp climate of Esher, he had been Archbishop of York (if we disregard the temporary lapse of his deprival at his fall, which, after all, did not last long, as he was

restored to his benefice in February 1530) for sixteen years, having been promoted from his bishopric of Lincoln in 1514, in succession to Cardinal Bainbridge, who died in that year at Rome. Yet he had never been near York, and into York itself he never went, unless, indeed, he paid a secret visit to the city during his brief stay at Cawood. Receiving a broad hint that his presence in the South was remarkably distasteful to the Duke of Norfolk, then coming into favour, he announced his desire to set out, if the necessary funds were furnished him. Something—not much—was supplied by the Lords of the Council, and in Passion Week of 1530 he began his journey. He spent that summer at Southwell Manor, in Nottinghamshire, where the Archbishops of York had one of their many residences, and if we are to believe contemporary evidence—leaving that of his biographer, George Cavendish, on one side—he began to acquit himself marvellously well in the discharge of his episcopal functions. It may be that in that quiet retreat his mind went back to the day whereon, in Westminster Abbey, in the presence of archbishops and bishops, abbots and priors, and all the magnates of the realm, he received his Cardinal's hat at the hands of Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and heard Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, preach a remarkable sermon, wherein were a few sentences directly addressed to the new Prince of the Church. "Let not one in so proud a position," said Colet, turning to Wolsey, "made most illustrious by the dignity of such an honour, be puffed up by its greatness. But remember that our Saviour, in His own person, said to His disciples, 'I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,' and 'He who is least amongst you shall be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven,' and again, 'He who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted. . . .' My Lord Cardinal, be glad, and enforce yourself always to do and execute righteousness to rich and poor, with mercy and truth."

16. Contemporary Opinion.

If, in his retreat at Southwell, Wolsey remembered Colet's admonitions, we have a key to what was said of him in a pamphlet published in 1536, wherein his behaviour while in Nottinghamshire is described. "Who," asks the writer, "was less beloved in the North than my Lord Cardinal before he was amongst them? Who better beloved after he had been there awhile? He gave bishops a right good example, how they might win men's hearts! There were few holy days but he would ride five or six miles from his house, now to this parish church, now to that, and there caused one of his doctors to make a sermon unto the people. He sat amongst them and said Mass before all the parish; he saw why churches were made; he began to restore them to their right and proper use; he brought his dinner with him, and bade divers of the parish to it. He inquired whether there were any debate or grudge between any of them. If there were, after dinner he sent for the parties to the church and made them all one." This course of conduct continued at Scrooby, further north, to which he removed before autumn; his episcopal activity manifested itself anew when he set out from Scrooby for Cawood, having since he left Richmond scraped together enough money to discharge the fees of his installation at York. All the way through Yorkshire he was busied with confirmations; at Nostell he was confirming candidates from the surrounding neighbourhood from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon; at Ferrybridge he confirmed two hundred children who awaited him on the village green. That very evening he reached Cawood—and before many days were over left it again, a prisoner, to die at Leicester.

17. The Sinister Figure.

Had Wolsey and Colet and More lived under a different king, the Reformation in England might have been

wrought under different circumstances. The country might have been spared violence and cruelty and the Terror which hung blood-red over it during the last phase of the reign of Henry VIII. The reformation of the monastic Orders might have been effected in wise, salutary, and kindly fashion. But that was not to be. If it was in the order of Divine Providence that it was not to be, then one may observe, in all reverence, that Divine Providence occasionally makes use of fearful instruments for working its design. One of these instruments is about to appear on the scene—the most remarkable, most extraordinary, most sinister figure that has ever crossed the stage of English history. To this day, when he has been dust and ashes for nigh four hundred years, one draws one's breath and stands spellbound, more with wonder than with fear, as one contemplates the cold, fell purpose and relentless policy of Thomas Cromwell.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VICAR-GENERAL

1. Cromwell at Esher.

Cavendish, the faithful servant and affectionate biographer of Cardinal Wolsey, tells us that, being in attendance upon his fallen master at Esher, what time the great man's fortunes had sunk so low that he had been obliged to borrow dishes to eat his meat in, he chanced on All Hallows Day, 1529, to go into the Great Chamber of the palace, and there found Thomas Cromwell with a primer in his hand, saying Our Lady Mattins. While he said his prayers the tears ran down his cheeks, whereupon Cavendish inquired as to the reason of his sorrow. Cromwell answered that he was like to lose all that he had toiled for, all the days of his life, for rendering true and diligent service to Wolsey, from whom he had so far never had any promotion to the increase of his living. But, he presently added, he would ride that afternoon to London and to the Court, and there—using a phrase which was habitual with him—he would either make or mar. Cavendish answered that in his opinion Cromwell would yet do very well, and so left him. But before Cromwell could depart a significant matter arose. Wolsey had no money wherewith to pay the servants. He spoke to Cromwell of his difficulty: Cromwell answered that the Cardinal had about him at that moment many chaplains who had profited well in his service; let them now lend to their lord in his necessity, lest the world hold them in indignation and hatred for their abominable ingratitude.

After which he had the yeomen and chaplains into the chamber where he and Wolsey stood, and after some words from the Cardinal addressed them himself in like terms to those he had just used, and to make his sentiments good, pulled out five pounds in gold, remarking that the chaplains were better able to give a pound than he a penny. Thereupon, says Cavendish, some gave ten pounds, and some ten marks, and some a hundred shillings, as their means would afford, and so Wolsey paid his servants a quarter's wages and board wages for a month, and Cromwell, once more remarking that he would go to London and make or mar, took horse and rode away on his mission. His clerk, Sir Ralph Sadler, rode with him—so, too, did those secret designs and thoughts of which Thomas Cromwell was full, and was an adept at keeping to himself.

2. His Early Days.

While he rides to London, intent on making or marring, let us turn back and inquire as to who Thomas Cromwell is. There is a good deal of mystery about him. He has been known for some time as one of the Cardinal's agents—a sharp, shrewd, astute, cunning man of business, who has been employed in conducting various affairs, and has a certain reputation amongst those who have been brought into contact with Wolsey's establishment. He has always steadily pushed on in life, and from very humble beginnings. In truth, he is the son of one Walter Cromwell, a man of not over-good character, who carried on two or three businesses at Putney, being a smith, a brewer, and a fuller of cloth, and whose family had come to the Putney-Wimbledon district from Nottinghamshire, where it had once been of distinction and even dignity. Walter Cromwell, who was sometimes called Smyth, was Constable of Putney in 1495, and owned a good deal of property in the place at one time. But he was a person of " most quarrelsome and riotous character," and con-

stable though he was in his time, was frequently brought before the local magistrates. Between 1475 and 1501 he was fined forty-eight times for breaking the assize of ale. He was frequently drunk. In 1477 he was fined for a violent assault on one William Michell; he was more than once in trouble for cutting the bushes on Putney Heath. There is, indeed, much more known of Walter Cromwell than of the early days of his famous son—of those days there is next to nothing known. Presumably, considering what his powers were in later years, Thomas Cromwell received at least the elements of a good education, which his sharpness of intellect helped him to improve as he grew older, but where he got it, and when, no one knows. He is said to have run away from home, having quarrelled with his father. This seems to be extremely probable. He is also said to have been very ill-behaved when young. Foxe, the martyrologist, says that Thomas Cromwell told Archbishop Cranmer that he, Cromwell, had been a ruffian in his younger days. But all that we know which is certain is that in his youth Thomas Cromwell went out of England, and for some time lived on the Continent. What he did there is not very clearly made out to us. Cardinal Pole, who knew him well, and wrote some account of him in his *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*, says that he became a mercenary in Italy. Bandello, an Italian writer, and Foxe both agree that he was present at the Battle of the Garigliano in December 1503, in the service of the French Army. Between that year and 1512, according to Pole, whom Mr. Merriman (*Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*) considers to give the most probable account of his doings at this period, he engaged in mercantile pursuits in Italy, and was for some time an accountant at Venice; we hear of him, too, as having been in Antwerp. And there is good reason for believing that about 1510 he was in Rome, and there managed to ingratiate himself with Pope Julius II. That he was well acquainted with Italy

there is no doubt—nor is there any doubt either that while he was there he made himself familiar with the writings of Machiavelli.

3. His Business in London.

According to a letter written in 1536 by one George Elyot, a mercer, recalling himself to Cromwell, its recipient was engaged in trade at Middelburg, in the Netherlands, in 1512. Elyot reminds him of the Syngsson Mart there in that year. But about that time he seems to have returned to England, married Elizabeth Wykys, daughter of one who had been gentleman-usher to Henry VII, and settled down in London as a merchant in wool and cloth. He probably got money with his wife; he was certainly well-to-do when he entered Wolsey's service. But before that he had become a solicitor, practising law as well as selling cloth and wool. "The strange combination of employments in which Cromwell was engaged," remarks Mr. Merriman, "fitted in well with the peculiar versatility of the man, and brought him into close contact with diverse sorts of men, in diverse conditions of life." But of the actual events of his life at this time we know nothing. Between 1512 and 1520 there is not a single trustworthy document concerning him. Numerous statements have been made as to his adventures during these years—as that his connexion with Wolsey began in 1514; that he first met Wolsey in France; that Lord Henry Percy introduced him to Wolsey: none of these are founded on any reliable grounds. But it may be that Mr. Phillips, who made many researches in the Wimbledon Court Rolls, and published his results in the *Antiquary*, is right in saying that Thomas Cromwell owed his introduction to Wolsey to his cousin Robert Cromwell, who was Vicar of Battersea, and well known to the Cardinal. In 1520 and 1523 we get accurate information as to the relations between Wolsey and Cromwell. In the first year Cromwell is mentioned by Wolsey in connexion

with an appeal case to Rome, between the Vicar of Cheshunt and the Prioress of the Benedictine Convent there; in the second he drafted a petition to Wolsey in Chancery on behalf of one John Palsgrave. Meanwhile his business as wool and cloth merchant in the City had prospered considerably; as to his practice as a solicitor, it is evident from the letters addressed to him, which are still in existence, that it was a very good one, and that he did a good deal in conveyancing, and in collecting debts. In addition to these things, he without doubt carried on the business of a money-lender; there is evidence that he charged high rates of interest. Altogether, between 1512, when he settled in London, and 1524, when he became definitely associated with Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, as merchant, solicitor, and usurer, did very well indeed, and was a man of considerable means. And though we do not know how he got his seat, we do know that in 1523 he was a Member of Parliament, and in the session of that year made an eventful speech (a copy exists in the Public Record Office) which was remarkable for two reasons—first, that it was in opposition to Wolsey's request for a subsidy to enable the King to carry on his French war; second, that it adumbrated the policy which Cromwell himself carried out in later years. It is more than probable that this speech—a masterly one, showing its maker's undoubted powers and abilities—brought Cromwell to the King's notice: moreover, it was so full of cunning and well-contrived flattery of King, nobles, and people that it could scarcely fail to make him popular. Certainly, in this Parliament—the first which Henry had summoned for eight years—the future Vicar-General laid the foundations of his subsequent high estate.

4. Servant to Wolsey.

From 1524 we hear no more of Cromwell as tradesman; probably he relinquished his business of merchant in

wool and cloth. But we begin to hear much more of him in connexion with law. In that year he became a member of Gray's Inn, and was appointed a Subsidy Commissioner in Middlesex. He began to be widely known in relation to Wolsey's affairs; it was evidently recognized that it was well to approach the master through the servant; it becomes usual to speak of Cromwell as "Councillor to my Lord Legate"; he is addressed as "The Right Worshipful Mr. Cromwell." Doubtless Wolsey, who knew men, recognized in this man, who, adventurer though he was, possessed enormous talents and capabilities, a rare power of understanding and dealing with human nature, a clever aptitude to business affairs, and a wonderful trick of readiness and firmness in carrying out what most men would have found it difficult to perform in the face of such opposition. And so when the task of suppressing the small monasteries, under Clement VII's Bull, came to be apportioned, Wolsey appointed Cromwell one of three commissioners, the other two being William Burbank and Sir William Gascoigne. These two appear to have been more or less of figureheads; the real work was done by Cromwell. Thus he became well acquainted with the methods which were so familiar later on, when his own agents did similar work—the sudden descent on the house, the examination of its rulers and inmates; the turning out of the poorly pensioned religious; the seizure of goods and furniture; the stripping of lead from roofs; the selling of lands and properties; in all this he was the directing figure in the case of the nine-and-twenty houses suppressed by Wolsey. His was also the leading part in the business negotiations relating to the educational foundation at Ipswich and the beginnings of Cardinal College at Oxford: all this labour he took off Wolsey's hands, and according to the available records, he must have toiled ceaselessly.

5. His Taking of Bribes.

How far were his hands clean? According to Mr. Merriman, who has given more labour to the study of Thomas Cromwell's life than any previous student of its history, they were remarkably dirty. "Cromwell's efficiency," he says, ". . . was only equalled by his notorious accessibility to bribes and presents in the disposal of monastic leases. . . . The minute Wolsey's back was turned, Cromwell and his companion De Alen, a hard and grasping man equally well trained in business, proceeded to use the power given into their hands to enrich themselves by every possible means, some of which were utterly unjustifiable. The monastery which could pay a large bribe was often left untouched; of those that were suppressed, probably a large proportion of the spoils was never employed at Oxford or Ipswich, but went straight into the pockets of the suppressors." It was impossible to keep this peculation entirely secret, and Cromwell became "generally hated." Nevertheless, he steadily rose in power and favour amongst the influential: that he also increased in wealth goes without saying; it is on record that in 1527 he began to grant annuities, which only a rich man could do. Crowds of suitors begin to approach him; their letters are sickening in their flattery and adulation; even great folk, noblemen as well as commoners, begin to lick his moneyed fingers. And busy as he is with Wolsey's business, he still keeps up his practice as a lawyer: he was busy in that until the time of Wolsey's fall in 1529. Before that—probably during the sweating sickness epidemic of 1527–28—he lost his wife, who left him one son, Gregory, who, unlike his brilliant father, was dull-witted, "stupid and slow beyond belief," though he eventually married the sister of Jane Seymour, made some show in public life, and was created a peer. At this time Cromwell lived in Austin Friars, in a handsomely appointed and furnished house, and judging by the

documents concerning him and it in the Public Record Office, he was at the time of Wolsey's fall a very well-to-do man.

6. His Schemes for Himself.

So we come to the day on which Cromwell, having said his prayers out of his primer, persuaded Wolsey's chaplains to lend a little ready money to the unfortunate Cardinal, and contributed five pounds out of his own pocket, rode off to London, intent on making or marring. Was he occupied with thoughts of repairing Wolsey's fortunes as he rode between Esher and Whitehall?—or was he scheming and contriving for the advancement of his own? Was he the faithful servant drawn by Shakespeare?—who seems to have been thinking of the good old family retainer so familiar in sentimental drama—or was he, in plain language, the rat scuttling away from the sinking ship? The answer to that lies in considering what he *did*. That is plain enough. Wolsey's star had set; Cromwell knew it. But there was another man's star rising—the Duke of Norfolk's. Also on the horizon was coming up the star of yet another—Gardiner. Clearly, the thing to do was to follow the rising stars—the other had disappeared, never to rise again. It was probably due to Norfolk's influence that Cromwell gained his seat in Parliament in 1529. In Parliament he adopted the wise and crafty course of appearing to champion his late master, while at the same time he produced Wolsey's confession of his misdeeds. Thus he secured the favour of both parties. He gained the reputation of the faithful servant, and the character of the just statesman. Mr. Merriman believes that Cromwell's doings in the Parliament of 1529 were "ordered" by the King. However that may be, it is certain that Cromwell emerged from them in a stronger position than ever. And then there was no going back to Esher, as he had promised. Cunningly and warily he discharged his debt to Wolsey by speaking for him in

1529; he worked for his pardon in the early weeks of 1530; but when the Cardinal's enemies gathered themselves, later on in the year, for their last successful assault on the great statesman, Cromwell stood aloof. Wolsey had served his turn, and he had no further use for him: the rest is silence. It was not to Cromwell, the tried, trusty, faithful friend, that Wolsey spoke his last bitterly regretful words; one cannot conceive that Wolsey ever could have spoken such words to such a man.

7. Appearance and Character.

Before we find out how Cromwell entered into the close service of Henry VIII, as he did very soon after the Wolsey episode, let us look at the man as he is drawn by Mr. Merriman. "Cromwell was a short, strongly built man, with a large, dull face. He was smooth-shaven, with close-cropped hair, and had a heavy double chin. His mouth was small and cruel, and was surmounted by an extraordinarily long upper lip, while a pair of grey eyes, set closely together, moved restlessly under his light eyebrows. He had an awkward, uncouth gait . . . which gave one the idea that he was a patient, plodding, and, if anything, a rather stupid sort of man. But this was all merely external . . . when engaged in an interesting conversation, his face would suddenly light up, and the dull, drudging, commonplace expression give way to a subtle, cunning, and intelligent aspect, quite at variance with his ordinary appearance." Chapuys, the Spanish Ambassador, who knew him well, noted that he had a trick of giving a roguish, oblique glance whenever he made a striking remark. He was famous for his ability to adapt himself to circumstances. No man could flatter so cleverly; no man could be harsher if need be. In society his manners were charming—none could resist his personal attraction. He was a splendid host; he had a great knack of drawing people out. And he had a rare taste

in art, and was a collector of beautiful things, and was a well-read man, especially in the works of Machiavelli.

Various accounts have been given of Cromwell's personal introduction to the special notice of the King to whom he was presently to be right-hand man. He probably came into close relations with Henry when the sovereign took into his own hands the ventures which Wolsey had initiated at Ipswich and Oxford. Chapuys says that when Wolsey died, Sir John Wallop so insulted and threatened Cromwell that Cromwell applied directly for protection to Henry, and at an interview with him promised to make him " the richest king that ever was in England." Pole, whose accounts of the whole affair seem most dependable, says that Cromwell secured an audience with Henry, boldly spoke to him about " the great matter " of his divorce, and advised him to cut himself and his kingdom clean away from the papacy. The difficulty of finding out the truth as to what did actually occur between Henry and Cromwell is deepened by the fact that both kept it secret ; the letters between them reveal next to nothing. But it is as Mr. Merriman observes : " the probabilities point to Cromwell as the true originator of the startling changes which occurred soon after his accession to power." The hesitancy about the royal divorce comes to a sudden end ; Henry moves, with quickness and decision ; almost before men have realized what is happening, the break with Rome is an accomplished fact, and the extraordinary and surprising events of 1534–40 are in process.

8. Introduction to the King.

Pole's account of the meeting between Henry and Cromwell, of which Mr. Merriman says, " there is every reason to believe in the veracity of this report," goes into detail. Henry, at that time, had become utterly discouraged in his efforts to obtain the wished-for divorce from Katharine ; Wolsey had been a failure ;

the clergy failed him; his Privy Council failed him. At this juncture appeared Cromwell, whom Pole characteristically styles *Satanæ Nuncius*. He introduces himself to his sovereign tactfully and with skill. Modestly he excuses his boldness in daring to offer advice. He has, however, an excellent excuse—his loyalty to his high lord, whom he wishes to serve, so far as his poor ability will allow. He is sure that the King's troubles are due to the weakness of his advisers. They have listened to the opinions of the common herd, and dare not act on their own responsibility. Then he comes to the great question of the divorce. All the wise and learned men are in favour of it: all that is lacking is papal sanction. Why should the King hesitate because this cannot be obtained? Already there are those who have renounced the authority of Rome. "Let the King, with the consent of Parliament, declare himself Head of the Church in England, and all his difficulties would vanish. England was at present a monster with two heads. If the King should take to himself the supreme power, religious as well as secular, every incongruity would cease; the clergy would immediately realize that they were responsible to the King and not to the Pope, and would forthwith become subservient to the Royal will." Such is the probable truth about Cromwell's advice to Henry: we may be sure that it fitted well with Henry's wishes, nor need we be surprised that its giver was rewarded with a place in the Privy Council.

9. Subjection of the Clergy.

From this time onward the movements against the then state of the Church in England must be considered as the work of Cromwell. His first move was a singularly astute and crafty one. He knew that his plan as to the disowning of papal authority would meet with strong opposition from the clergy, regular and secular; they, accordingly, must be brought into subjection. He had a scheme for that, already prepared. The guilt of

Wolsey, it was announced, was shared in by Convocation, the Privy Council, the two Houses of Parliament, even by the nation itself, inasmuch as all had recognized Wolsey in his capacity of Legate *a latere* : all had become, in the words of the covering statute, his " fautors and abettors." The whole body of clergy were " all in the præmunire," which the Attorney-General filed against them in the Court of King's Bench. There then followed what Cromwell had expected. Convocation met and " offered the King one hundred thousand pounds to be their good lord and also to give them a pardon of all offences touching the Præmunire, by Act of Parliament." Henry refused—unless a clause was inserted in the preamble setting him forth as " Only Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England." Weak as the clergy were, they made some show of fight, and Henry was finally induced to consent to the amendment proposed by Archbishop Warham—an amendment which was of the nature of a compromise, and in the end was of no effect. The Convocations of both provinces then agreed with the royal demands, that of York voting an additional eighteen thousand pounds, and the pardon was granted. In the following year, once more through the clever designs of Cromwell, Convocation was reduced to complete submission, and the first great steps for establishing the Royal Supremacy in Church and State had been accomplished.

10. The Breach with Rome.

During the next three years the breach with Rome was steadily widened. Various admonitions in the form of hints were dispatched from the Pope to Henry ; Henry paid no attention to them. In January 1533 he was secretly married to Anne Boleyn ; in May, Cranmer, who had succeeded Warham as Archbishop of Canterbury, pronounced the marriage with Katharine invalid ; a few days later he declared that with Anne lawful. In July, Henry was formally excommunicated : towards

the end of the year orders were given out that none should preach at Paul's Cross without declaring in his sermon that the Pope had no more authority than any other foreign bishop. Similar orders were sent to the heads of the four Orders of friars. It was determined that henceforth the Pope should only be spoken of as Bishop of Rome ; during the remainder of Henry's and the whole of Edward VI's reign he is invariably referred to by that title in all State papers. "The Pope," says Gairdner, "was now to be considered only as a foreign bishop who had no authority in England, and whose judgment either in faith or morals was no longer to be regarded." When Parliament met in January 1534 various measures were passed which showed that the Roman authority was at an end. The abolition of annates was confirmed. Henceforth no bishops were to be presented to the Pope. No Bulls were to be procured from Rome. Bishops were to be elected by the King's *congé d'élire* ; bishops-elect were to be presented to the archbishop of the province ; an archbishop to another metropolitan and two bishops, or to four bishops appointed by the Crown to consecrate him. The Peter's Pence payments and all other tributes to Rome were ordered to be discontinued. Any person suing to Rome for any sort of faculty was to incur the penalties of præmunire. All appeals to Rome were forbidden : all future appeals from archbishops or abbots were in future to be heard in Chancery. On March 31 the Convocation of Canterbury declared that the Bishop of Rome "has no greater jurisdiction conferred upon him by God in this kingdom than any other foreign bishop" : that of York followed suit on May 5. Declarations of royal supremacy were obtained from Oxford, Cambridge, and the various monastic houses between May and December : there was little difficulty with the universities or with the monks, but the friars were harder to deal with. Parliament met in November, and passed a short Act declaring the King Supreme Head of the

Church in England, and annexing the title to the Crown, and on January 15, 1535, an Order in Council confirmed this, and Henry VIII was henceforth "on earth Supreme Head of the Church of England."

11. Cromwell's Advancement.

During these five years Thomas Cromwell had been steadily advancing in power. In 1531 and 1532 he had been appointed Privy Councillor, Master of the Jewels, Clerk of the Hanaper, and Master of the King's Wards. In 1533 he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer: a little later he became Principal Secretary to the King. And in January 1535, a few days after the Order in Council just referred to, he was appointed Vicar-General, and Visitor-General of the Monasteries, and began the work of destruction with which his name is chiefly associated. But before we consider that, we must look back and see what he had been doing during the five years of ecclesiastical revolution. Much of his labour was of a secret and underground sort. Mr. Merriman thinks that he began his system of espionage—"the most effective that England had ever seen"—in 1532. Its object, of course, was the detection of disaffection and sedition amongst Henry's subjects, high-placed or low-placed, but especially amongst the clergy. Cromwell was eminently successful in prosecuting this branch of his multifarious work: he may well be regarded as the first of those European statesmen who from the sixteenth century onward made great use of secret service. He planted his spies and agents everywhere; the monk in his cloister was no safer than the tradesman in his tavern; the peer in his country house was as liable to have his sayings reported as the peasant gossiping in the village street. Sermons were eagerly listened to by these myrmidons. An obscure parson, talking in confidence from his pulpit to his parishioners, was often amazed, long afterwards, to find that some chance phrase had been carried to London to the watch-

ful Minister, and that he was henceforth an object of suspicion and a candidate for the gaol. A mass of Cromwell's "Private Notes for Remembrance" is still in existence, and shows how he carefully collected and stored up material incriminatory of others. It seems amazing that in such a short time and in those days of poor means of communication he contrived to spread his network so thoroughly all over the kingdom. Yet "in every county and village, almost in every homestead," says Dean Hook (*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*), "he had a secret force of informers and spies. They depended on the patronage of the Vicegerent, who, generous and despotic, could give as well as take away. In the enthusiasm of their selfish loyalty they were on the watch for traitors, and in the well-paid piety of their hearts they had a terrible dread of superstition." Under this system, too, Cromwell introduced the practice of secret trial. Many a man was quietly arrested, brought as quietly before him, and quietly put away—often never to appear again.

12. His Use of the Press.

But Cromwell was not only the first man to introduce into England the system of espionage of which he had doubtless learnt the rudiments during his Continental experiences—he was also the first Englishman to whom we may justly apply the title of Press Agent. He was quick to perceive the value of publicity; to appreciate the help which could be afforded by the printing-machine. A flood of literature in favour of the new policy was poured over the country—cheap books, cheaper broadsides, ballad-papers, song-sheets: they were in every man's hands. It was part of his scheme that these things should be scurrilous: his crafty intelligence taught him that abuse and contempt are valuable weapons. To him, as originator and willing abettor, we owe the vast volume of abominable literature which followed upon the events of 1534. "He was the

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great patron of ribaldry," says Maitland, "and the protector of the ribalds, of the low jester, the filthy ballad-monger, the alehouse singers, and 'hypocritical mockers in feasts'; in short, of all the blasphemous mocking and scoffing which disgraced the Protestant party at the time of the Reformation. It is of great consequence, in our view of the times, to consider that the vile publications, of which too many remain, while most have rotted, and the profane pranks which were performed, were not the outbreaks of low, ignorant partisans, a rabble of hungry dogs such as is sure to run after a party in spite even of sticks and stones bestowed by those whom they follow and disgrace. It was the result of design and policy, earnestly and elaborately pursued by the man possessing, for all such purposes, the highest place and power in the land."

13. His Religious Opinions.

Foxe, in the first edition of his *Martyrology*, calls Thomas Cromwell "this valiant soldier and Captain of Christ . . . by whose industry and ingenious labours divers excellent ballads and books were set abroad." We know of what character these books and ballads were, but what do we know of Cromwell's own religious opinions? He had set himself to change the aspect of religion in England—what was his own religion? Had he himself been asked such a question, and could anything have induced so secret-loving a man to answer it truthfully and unreservedly, he would probably have replied that his religion was that of the master he happened to be serving. In spite of the primer and "Our Lady Mattins" with which Cavendish found him busy in the Great Chamber at Esher, it is much to be doubted if he had any religious principles at all. "Cromwell," remarks Jeremy Collier (*Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*), "was no Papist at his Death. But then, it is pretty plain he was no Protestant neither." Pole, who had ample means of knowing, always said that

Cromwell was an infidel—by which he probably meant an indifferentist, or, perhaps, a freethinker. Foxe, and similar writers, have claimed him as a champion of Protestantism, and it is true that he had intimate relations with certain reformers of the Tyndale type and with various Continental Lutherans. Also he was zealous for the publication of the Bible in English, and his name is prominently associated with the Ten Articles of 1536, but in each case his true object was not religious, but wholly political. As regards the Ten Articles he knew that a statement of the new position was a matter of absolute necessity; as regards the version of Holy Scripture issued under his protection by Miles Coverdale he knew what a splendid political weapon the Bible had become in the hands of the Lutherans: out of the publication of that version he made a very handsome pecuniary profit. The real truth about Cromwell would seem to be that he had no personal instincts towards either of the rival systems. The keynote to his character lies in his conversation with Reginald Pole wherein he said that "the great art of the politician was to penetrate through the disguise which sovereigns are accustomed to throw over their real inclinations, and to devise the most specious expedients by which they may gratify their appetites without appearing to outrage morality or religion." Cromwell's business in life was the business of his Prince. When they first met, he knew that Henry desired a divorce, and that the Pope stood in the way. Let the Pope be removed—once and for all. The clergy would rebel. Let the clergy be brought to heel—and kept there. There would have to be a new settlement of religion. Let it be made. Let anything, everything be done, so that the prince may have his way. Let us serve the Time—of the past and the future no man who deserves well of the present should take stock. "The whole essence of Cromwell's personality," says Mr. Merriman, "consists of different manifestations of one fundamental,

underlying trait, which may perhaps be best expressed by the common phrase, ' a strict attention to business.' "

14. His Business Abilities.

That he was a splendid business man his whole life is an unassailable proof. He probably went out of England with no more property than he carried on his back and in his poorly equipped purse, yet he must have been fairly prosperous when he returned, and he was certainly well-to-do within a very short time of his settling down in London. We have already seen that he was one of those men who can carry on several businesses at a time; the genius that enabled him to practise law, sell cloth, and deal in wool, all at once, enabled him, in his more glorious period, to do the work of more offices than fell to any other public man of his day. For Thomas Cromwell had many preferments. In addition to those of high degree which have been already mentioned, and to those which came after, he received no fewer than sixteen minor appointments between August 1533 and January 1539. He was Recorder of Bristol, Joint Constable of Hertford Castle, Joint Constable of Berkeley Castle, Steward of the Savoy, Steward of Edelmeton and Says Bery, High Steward of the University of Cambridge, Prebendary of Blewbury in the Diocese of Sarum, Chief Steward of Writtle, Steward of Havering-atte-Bower, Dean of Wells, Warden and Chief Justice of the Royal Forests, Captain of the Isle of Wight, Steward of the Isle of Wight, Constable of Carisbrooke Castle, Master of the Hunt, and Constable of Leeds Castle. These were small things, but they had their value. And in 1536 he was made Lord Privy Seal and Vicegerent of the King in Spirituals; at the same time he was raised to the peerage as Baron Cromwell: in 1537 he was made a Knight of the Garter. And just before his fall he was created Earl of Essex, and appointed Great Chamberlain of England.

15. His Correspondence.

A business man is best known by the quality of his correspondence, and Cromwell was a great writer of letters: Mr. Merriman prints 351 in his *Life and Letters*. The folk to whom they are addressed are of all sorts and conditions—the King, Wolsey, archbishops and bishops, abbots and priors, legal dignitaries, agents, foreign correspondents, merchants, tradesmen. Always there is the same command and grasp of subject; where it is necessary to write at length, no expenditure of time, pains, and paper is too great; where a brief communication will do, it is expressed tersely and lucidly in a few lines. These are the letters of a man of affairs who knows exactly what he wants doing, and how it should be done. Let us look at some specimens. Here is a letter from Cromwell to Henry, announcing the passing through the House of Commons of the Act which forbade any man to keep more than two thousand sheep:

January 1534

Pleasythyt your most Royall Mageste to be aduertysed how that according to your most highe pleasure and commaundement I have made serche for such pattentes and grauntys as your highnes and also the most Famous Kyng your father whose Sowle our lorde pardon haue grauntyd unto Sir Rychard Weston Knyght your vndertesawrer of your exchequer and the same haue sent to your highnes herin closyd yt may also please your most Royall Mageste to knowe how that yesterdaye ther passyd your Commons a byll that no person within this your Realme shall hereafter kepe and Noryshe aboue the Nombre of twoo thousand shepe and also that the eight parte of euerye mans lande being a Fermour shall for euer hereafter be put in tyllage yerlye which byll yf by the gret wysdom vertuew goodness and zeeale that your highnes beryth towardes this your Realme might have good Succure and take good effect Amongst your lordes aboue I doo Conjecture and Suppose in my pore Symple and Unworthye Judgment that your highness shall do the most noble proffyttable and most benefycall thing that euer was done to

the Commone welthe of this your Realme and shall therby Increase suche welthe in the same amongyst the gret Nombre and multytude for your most louiyng and obedyent Subiectys as never was Seane in this Realme Sythen Brewtyse tyme most humblye prostrate at the Fete of your Magnifycence beseche your highnes to pardon my boldnes in this wrytyng to your grace which only procedythe for the trowthe dewtye allegaunce and loue I doo bere to your mageste and the Common welth of this your Realme as our lorde knowyth unto whom I shall as I am most bounden Incessantlye praye for the contenewans and prosperous conseruacion of your most excellent most Royall and Imperyall estate long to Indure.

There is much less verbiage and flattery in the following letter to the Prior and Convent of Wenlock, in which he desires them to grant to one Thomas Lowley the lease of a farm at the rent formerly paid by his father :

May 1534

In myn harty maner I commende me unto youe. And whereas ye haue nowe in your handes and disposicion again, the ferme of Oxinbold belonging to that Monastery. These shalbe to desire and hartely praye youe, for my sake to graunte a sufficient lease thereof to my Freende Thomas Lowleye seruant to Mr Norreys vnder your convent seale for the terme of xl yeres yelding and payeng vnto yow suche rent for the same, as his father whiche was fermour thereof hertofore paid vnto your monastery at that tyme that he had it in ferme. Desiring you in noo wise to alienate it to any man but only to this tyl ye shall knowe furthur, in case ye shall not condescende to this my request, and to aduertise me by your Letteres with speed of your proceeding in this Behaulf. And thus fare you hartely well. From Stepnaye the first day of Maye.

The following, to the Prior of Dudley, is a good specimen of Cromwell's style when he was dealing with some ecclesiastic who was to be brought under subjection :

February 1535

I commende me unto you. Lating you wit that for certain causes the particularities whereof ye shall knowe hereafter the

Kinge's pleasure and commaundement is ye shall immediately vppon the sight hereof all delayes and excuses set aparte, personally repaire vnto me wheresoeuer it shall chaunce me to be without faylling as ye wil answer to his grace at your extreme perill. From the Rulles the xth of Februarye.

16. His Ecclesiastical Policy.

Though the suggestion of the ecclesiastical policy which came into being from January 1535 sprang, at the moment, from Cromwell, there was nothing original about the policy in itself. When Henry VIII claimed supremacy over the Church of England, he was merely claiming and reviving powers which previous English sovereigns had already claimed and exercised. No greater misreading of history is possible than that which insists that the Church of England made a new departure in polity in the sixteenth century. What was done was to accentuate, once for all, the truth that it was a national Church, independent of papal rule. From the days of the Anglo-Saxon Church onward, assertion of independence had always been in evidence. Sometimes it was timid, sometimes half-hearted, but it was always there. "There was no Roman legation from the days of Theodore to those of Offa," says Stubbs (*Constitutional History*), "and only scanty vestiges of such interference for the next three centuries: Dunstan boldly refused to obey a papal sentence." William the Conqueror firmly repudiated any direct claim on the part of the papacy. "He would not suffer," writes Eadmer, "that any one in his dominions should receive the pontiff of the city of Rome as Apostolic Pope, except at his command, or should on any condition receive his letters if they had not been first shown to himself." Henry I told Pope Paschal II that as long as he lived not one of the rights and customs of the realm of England should be taken away from it, and that even if he, as king, consented to it, his whole kingdom would rise against it. Though John basely sold the liberties

of Church and people, his ignoble traffic with Rome was expressly repudiated by the barons at Lincoln in 1301. The attitude of Grosseteste to the papal claims is well known. Papal excommunications were little heeded by English Parliaments. One of the most serious charges brought against Richard II was that he had violated the dignity of the Crown and the laws of the realm by obtaining a papal Bull against his enemies. Always the spirit of independence was in the English Church—the examples of its manifestation lie thick on the pages of history. It owed to Rome precisely what Freeman says, "a strong reverence for its parent," but—as he also says—it had always held a greater independence than the other Churches of the West, and its kings and assemblies never gave up their power in ecclesiastical matters. That the papacy, during three hundred years, had been permitted great licence, which was sorely abused, was no proof of papal dominion over the national Church, and when Henry threw it aside in unceremonious fashion he was only going back to what had existed in earlier days. It may be that Cromwell was well read in ecclesiastical history, and knew what the true position of the English Church was, and that nothing could prevent the assertion of her ancient liberties. And whatever his own private character, and however bad and ruthless his methods, he had full historical authority for the advice he gave to his master when he counselled him to repudiate the claims of Rome.

17. The Tyranny, 1535–45.

But legal as Cromwell's advice undoubtedly was, it was with a harsh and terrible cruelty that he assisted his master in putting the counsel into practice. From the time that Cromwell was appointed Vicar-General and Vicegerent in matters spiritual, the country was subjected to a tyranny which has not been equalled for mercilessness and horror since that day—not even

by the Terror of the French Revolution. Much of this is, of course, to be attributed to the character of Henry VIII. It is to be noted how this King, the older he grew, waxed more terrible in despotism, passing on from one deed of cruelty to another until his sun went down in a sea of blood. His favourites—or, to be more correct, his instruments—serve his purpose and are thrown from him, to the dungeon or the scaffold. All go the same way—Wolsey, More, Cromwell: many others of less note. Cromwell might have known—perhaps did know, but could not, with all his craftiness, gauge the exact moment—what was probably in store. He had had his warning from a far greater man than himself. When he first entered Henry's service, Cromwell received some advice from Sir Thomas More, in respect of his relations with the King. "Tell him what he *ought* to do," said More, "but never what he is *able* to do. For if a lion knew its own strength, it were hard for any man to rule it."

18. The Carthusians.

Henry came to know his own strength, and from 1535 he exercised it, ruthlessly, cruelly, despotically, with Cromwell as the ready and willing agent. It is difficult to find out which was really master and which pupil; which was instigator and which abettor, but between them, master and man made England a shambles. Cromwell was an adept in straining law—his first notable work in this way resulted in three vile and heartless judicial murders. In the April of 1535 orders were issued for the arrest of all who still held by the jurisdiction of the Pope, or offered prayer in public on his behalf, and examples began to be made. First came that wrought on certain Carthusian monks—John Houghton, Prior of the London Charterhouse; Augustine Webster, Prior of Axholme; and Robert Laurence, Prior of Bevall, with whom were associated Dr. Richard Reynolds, of the Bridgettine house at Sion, and John

Hale, Vicar of Isleworth. Feeling that they could not conscientiously take the new oaths, certain of them visited Cromwell privately and begged that they and their brethren should not be pressed. We may be sure of what passed at this interview. On April 20 the five were brought up before Cromwell publicly at the Rolls Court, and there asked if they would acknowledge and obey the King as Supreme Head of the Church of England. All declined, and were forthwith sent to the Tower, where, a day or two later, Cromwell and certain counsellors visited and pleaded with them. The five prisoners remained firm: loyal subjects they would prove themselves, but it was against their consciences to acknowledge the King's headship in spiritualities. So on April 28 they were brought to trial at Westminster before a special court presided over by the Duke of Norfolk. Much effort was expended in endeavouring to secure their conformity to the new law, but it was of no avail, and they were next day found guilty and sentenced to death for treason. The execution was carried out on May 4, with, says Gairdner, "more than usual brutality, the men being ripped up in each other's presence, their arms torn off, and their hearts rubbed upon their mouths and faces."

19. Fisher.

Fisher's turn came soon afterwards. He was a Yorkshireman, a native of Beverley, where he was born in 1459. Educated at Cambridge, he became master of the old college of Michael House in 1497. He was one of the principal founders of St. John's College, and helped in the formation of the library which was called "the finest in Christendom." He was Chancellor of the University of Cambridge in 1504, and in the same year was appointed Bishop of Rochester; in the last year of his life he was raised to the dignity of a cardinal by Pope Paul III. He was a man of great erudition,

and a devoted supporter of the New Learning. From the first he had vigorously opposed the granting of a divorce between Henry and Katharine. Alone amongst the bishops he had fought against the declaration of Royal Supremacy. When he was brought to trial in Westminster Hall, June 17, 1535, he was an old and feeble man. Condemned for high treason, he was given five days in which to prepare himself. Froude tells the story of his end in a few graphic sentences. "When the last morning dawned, he dressed himself carefully —as he said, for his marriage-day. The distance to Tower Hill was short. He was able to walk; and he tottered out of the prison gates, holding in his hand a closed volume of the New Testament. The crowd flocked about him, and he was heard to pray that, as this book had been his best comfort and companion, so in that hour it might give him some special strength, and speak to him as from his Lord. Then, opening it at a venture, he read: *This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.*"

20. More.

Another victim came forth from the Tower a few days later. Sir Thomas More had a reputation for wisdom which had spread over Europe. He had been the close, personal, trusted friend of the King. He was the friend, too, of the great scholars of his day; men had looked to him as to a pillar of light. He had filled the highest office open to a subject. In sagacity, in knowledge, in manners he had no equal in the England of his time. But he would give no support to the new law: in that he was inflexible as Fisher and the Carthusians. Committed to the Tower, he went thither cheerfully, knowing what the end would be. His wife urged him to give way and make his peace with the King, and so come home to his good house. He answered that his cell in the Tower was as near Heaven as his own house

at Chelsea was, and that he had no mind to leave it. Cromwell visited him in the Tower and tried his cajoleries on him. One would have given much to have been present at the interview between the subtle and crafty upstart and the honest-minded, upright gentleman. On July 1, 1535, More faced his judges in Westminster Hall. "The outcome was not in doubt," remarks Sir Sidney Lee (*Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century*). ". . . More, the faithful son of the Old Church, and the disciple of the New Culture, was sentenced to be hanged at Tyburn. As he left the court, he remarked that no temporal lord could lawfully be head of the Church; that he had studied the history of the papacy, and was convinced that it was based on Divine authority." The sentence was commuted to one of beheading, and on July 6 the wisest man in Europe walked calmly to the scaffold on Tower Hill, asked the officer in charge of him to see him safely up, and that as for his coming down he would shift for himself, and so, cheerful and witty to the last, went to his death.

21. Cromwell's Relentlessness.

The world marvelled that any king should put so great a man to so poor a use, and the Emperor Charles V exclaimed that he would have rather lost the best city of his dominions than such a counsellor. But Henry and Cromwell had their own views on these matters—how practical and cold-blooded Cromwell's were may be learned from the notes in his memoranda. Mr. Merriman accuses Cromwell of poisoning Henry's mind against Fisher and More, especially against More. "There is every reason to think," he says, "that he [Cromwell] was the true cause of the ex-Chancellor's death. It is not likely that Henry would have consented to the execution of a man whom he had formerly loved and respected as much as More, unless his counsellor had poisoned his heart against him. Moreover, the mentions of More and Fisher in Cromwell's 'Remem-

brances' are so frequent and of such a character as to leave little doubt that he had determined to ruin them from the first." "No touch either of love or hate swayed him from his course," says Green. "The student of Machiavelli had not studied *The Prince* in vain. He had reduced bloodshed to a system. Fragments of his papers still show us with what a businesslike brevity he ticked off human lives among the casual 'Remembrances' of the day. '*Item*, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading.' '*Item*, to know the King's pleasure touching Master More.' '*Item*, when Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other.' It is indeed this utter absence of all passion, of all personal feeling, that makes the figure of Cromwell the most terrible in our history. He has an absolute faith in the end he is pursuing, and he simply hews his way to it as a woodman hews his way through the forest, axe in hand."

22. The Attack on the Monasteries.

In that summer of 1535 the English people lay powerless in the hands of Henry and his Minister. "The nobles," says Gairdner (*History of the English Church*, iv), "had lost their independence, the common people were powerless without a head, and the Church within the kingdom—that element of the national life which had really most freedom of spirit—was not only bound and shackled, but terrorized and unable to speak out." But still worse things were at hand. Cromwell's power as Vicegerent in matters spiritual was a deep and far-reaching one. He was empowered to hold visitations, to correct and suspend bishops and clergy, to confirm or annul episcopal elections, and to call synods—never had such authority been delegated to one man. And now his chief work comes into prominence. There is little doubt that for some time he had secretly resolved on the absolute destruction of the religious houses. He

had his reasons—they were purely political in their nature. Always keeping in view his main purpose—the strengthening of the power of the Crown—he turned on the monastic Orders as being undoubted outposts of the papacy. His astute mind knew that while the secular clergy could readily be brought to heel, there would never be complete subjection so long as the monasteries, free from episcopal supervision and still virtually independent of any power outside themselves, remained in existence. It was no religious reform that he contemplated: that, we may be sure, did not trouble him in the least, if it even ever crossed his thoughts. When the full power of his Vicegerency came into his hands, it was not a sweeping and cleansing of the monastic edifice that he designed, but the absolute levelling of every stone that stood in its walls. The steps taken were designedly gradual, but the result was never in doubt.

23. The Financial Aspect.

But there was another and a powerful reason. Cromwell had promised Henry that he would make him the richest king in Christendom. In spite of all their troubles, the religious communities were rich. They owned vast possessions in lands and houses, money and jewels, vestments and furnishings, lead and stone. They were as well worth sacking as a score of prosperous capitals. Probably he had made a careful estimate of what they were worth. Modern estimates of that worth vary considerably. An early writer on the subject, Harmer, who endeavoured to correct some of the errors of Bishop Burnet, says that the monastic Orders held not one-fifth part of the kingdom—surely a mistaken estimate. Blunt, in his Church history, gives several calculations. He thinks that the annual revenue was £200,000; and that the capital value of the income which came into Henry's hands was no less than £48,000,000—in modern value, of course. This is

reckoning that money is now worth ten times—and something over—what it was then, and calculating the capital at something beyond twenty years' value of the income. A modern historian, Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, makes a much more moderate estimate. "The land held by monastic corporations in England," he says, "has been calculated at one-fifteenth of the cultivable area of the country, distributed between some 600 houses of monks and nuns, containing perhaps 8000 'professed religious' persons, i.e. persons who had taken the full monastic vow. One may perhaps multiply this number by ten in order to include all the persons who directly or indirectly depended for their livelihood on the monastic system, say 80,000 persons in all; and this in a population far short of 4,000,000. The amount of wealth expressible in money is much more difficult to calculate. But even if we include the 2300 chantries and the 110 hospitals which shared the fate of the monasteries either before or just after the end of the reign, it is still difficult to believe that the total value of the clerical spoil could have reached fifteen millions (present value of money), as it is sometimes stated to have done; at the same time, four millions is probably too modest an estimate."

24. Estimates of Values.

The difficulty in arriving at a proper estimate lies, of course, in the other difficulty of finding the proper multiple. Most writers and calculators have gone on ten as the right figure. But Mr. Hilaire Belloc assures us that ten is by no means the right figure, nor anything like it—"a general multiple of twenty," he says in his book on *The Historic Thames*, "when one considers wages as well as staple foods, is as high as can be fixed safely, while a general multiple of twelve is certainly too low." Then he proceeds to give an example. "Supposing, for instance," he goes on, "we take the high multiple of twenty, and say that the revenues of

Westminster at its dissolution in the first days of 1540 were some £80,000 a year in our modern money, we are far underestimating the economic position of Westminster in the State. There are to-day many private men in London who dispose of as great an income, and who, for all their ostentation, are not remarkable; but the income of Westminster, in the early sixteenth century, when wealth was far more equally divided than it is now, and when the accumulation of it was far less, was a very different matter to what we mean to-day by £80,000 a year. It produced more of the effect which we might to-day imagine would be produced by a million. . . . The temptation to sack Westminster was something like the temptation presented to our financial powers to-day to get at the rubber of the Congo Basin or at the unexploited coal of Northern China." Now, if we accept Mr. Belloc's "high multiple of twenty," and accept Blunt's estimate of £200,000 as the annual income of the religious houses, lumped together, it is evident that in our money [i.e. our money in its value before 1914] the monastic bodies were worth four millions a year, and the capital value of this, reckoned at twenty years' purchase, would be eighty millions sterling.

25. Treasurer's Accounts.

Gasquet, in a mass of figures in his *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, gives a much more reasonable and far more likely estimate, founded on figures taken from official records. A good many of these records are in existence. The accounts of the Treasurer of the Court of Augmentation are preserved in the Record Office. And as actual figures are the best things to go by, it may be well to set down here what the Treasurer actually received between April 24, 1536, and Michaelmas 1547—in other words, between the beginning of the Suppression and the death of Henry VIII.

	£	s.	d.
Revenue from monastic lands	415,005	6	10½
Paid by religious for royal licence to continue	5,948	6	8
Sales of monastic lands by King	855,751	18	5
Sale of woods	634	6	6
Fines paid by tenants for new leases	4,529	9	10½
Sales of ornaments, vestments, lead, bells, furniture, buildings	26,502	1	0¼
Deductions from religious pensions as a forced loan to the King	9,443	15	6
Loan to King for war purposes from the religious and clergy	12,870	16	8
Payments by collectors and other officers for royal leave to be free from military service	5,776	7	8½
Miscellaneous: Arrears of collectors, etc.	1,979	19	11¾
Total	£1,338,442	9	2½

[Certain figures, given by Gasquet, should be carefully noted. The Treasurer's rolls show that there came into the hands of the King from the monasteries, in round figures, 14,500 oz. of pure gold, 129,500 oz. of silver gilt, 74,000 oz. of parcel gilt, and 68,000 oz. of silver. Sir John Williams reckoned this to be worth, at the melting price, in money of that date, about £64,000.] It will be remarked that in the foregoing account the net result to the royal exchequer of the sale of the monastic lands was, in round figures, £856,000. Reckoning this at ten times its value, we get an equivalent, as Gasquet points out, of £8,500,000. Fixing a mean between the usually accepted ten and Mr. Belloc's "multiple of twenty," we get an equivalent of over £13,000,000. Taking all the various facts and figures into consideration, it would certainly appear that the capital value of the monastic spoils far exceeded the four millions spoken of by Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, and that a more probable sum is found in twelve millions. And in this connexion it should be remembered that

a careful examination of the official records shows that while some of the purchasers got their lands at fair prices, equal to twenty years' purchase, others are known to have got properties at very much lower rates. Sir Richard Gresham paid at the rate of twenty years' purchase for Fountains; Cromwell's nephew, Richard Williams, got Ramsey, which was worth more than £1700 a year, for about three years' purchase. What the gross bulk of the property was sold at, then, does not represent its real value.

26. Cromwell's Share.

Before we pass on to consider what was done under Cromwell as regards the suppression of the eight Cistercian houses in Yorkshire, we may profitably glance at the records of Cromwell's own share in the monastic spoils. We have already seen that during the period in which he was engaged by Wolsey in the limited suppression of 1524–29, he took good care to feather his own nest. But his pickings on that occasion were as nothing compared to his wholesale benefitings by his rise to power. From the time of his appointment as Vicar-General, bribes, presents, gifts, flowed in upon him ceaselessly. The account book of his steward, Thomas Avery, is in existence in the Record Office. Its entries show how Cromwell took care to profit by his position. From the archbishops down to the humblest laymen, crowds of people sent him money, and not only money, but bribes in kind; horses, hawks, game, apples, fish—all, indeed, is fish that comes to his net. He shows himself a very cormorant, and takes good care to disgorge nothing. On January 1, 1539, his New Year's presents come to £800. There are other fortunate occasions. The Prior of St. Swithin's at Winchester gives him £300. The Abbot of Evesham sends him £266. The Prior of Rochester forwards £100 for his acceptance. Marmaduke Bradley, anxious for the abbacy of Fountains, offers 600 marks "to make

hym abbot ther," and " to pay yowe immediately affter the election, withoute delay or respite, at one payment "—a fine example of what things had got to amongst the community at Fountains. Archbishop Cranmer gives Cromwell £40 a year, " as a memorial of our friendship," he puts it, but it is plain that the real reason is a currying of favour. As soon as the rumours of Dissolution are abroad he is overwhelmed with offers. The Abbot of Pipewell will give £200. The monks at Colchester offer him just ten times as much—an enormous sum for those days. Durham, which has been giving him £5 a year, will give him £10. One Abbot of Leicester sends £40 ; his successor supplements it with a brace of fat oxen and twenty fat wethers. There is no doubt that while the religious houses existed, Cromwell, to his own shame and to the equal shame and disgrace of the monks, sold appointments in them. The case of Marmaduke Bradley is one illustration, but there are others. Sir Piers Dutton writes to Cromwell to tell him that there is a certain monk of Vale Royal who " will be contented to give your mastership a £100 in hand and furthur to do you as large pleasure as any man shall " if he will only nominate him to the abbacy. Two Yorkshire communities—Gisborough and Whitby—figure in this connexion ; there were monks in each who were willing to buy ecclesiastical preferment.

27. His Share of Monastic Property.

As to the Vicar-General's precise share in the monastic spoils, it is certain that he took good care to profit largely. He received a great deal of the monastic land by grant from the Crown : the properties of several priories in various parts of the kingdom fell to him. Lound, in Leicestershire ; Yarmouth, in Norfolk ; Alcester, in Warwick ; St. Osithe's, in Essex ; Modenham, in Kent ; and Mickelham and Lewes, in Sussex, all became his. He made some alterations and repairs at Lewes Priory, and sent his son Gregory, then recently

married, to live there ; in the Cromwell Correspondence, in the Record Office, there is a letter from Gregory, in which he remarks that the bride finds her residence "very commodious." Other members of Cromwell's family profited, too. His nephew, Sir Richard, great-grandfather of the coming Lord Protector of a hundred years later, was, under his uncle's favour, appointed a Royal Commissioner at the time of the Suppression, and he got several fine properties—Hinchinbrooke, Sawtry, St. Neots, Neath, Ramsey, St. Helen's in London, and lesser places. In addition to his grants from the Crown, Cromwell secured still more monastic land by private arrangement. Also he got large quantities of saleable goods : he sold £1200 worth of such goods at Lewes alone, for his own benefit, of course. He was wisely mindful of taking care that his agents, spies, and commissioners profited, too. He scribbles down their names in his "Remembrances." "*Item*, to remember Warren for one monastery, Mr. Gostwyke for a monastery, John Freeman for Spalding, Mr. Kingsmill for Wherwell, myself for Laund. *Item*, to remember John Godsalve for something, for he hath need." They all had need, these hungry seekers after other folk's goods. Cromwell himself doubtless considered his own need was great, in view of his labours. But during the last two or three years of his extraordinary career he was a very wealthy man. The records show that after the suppression of the religious houses had fairly set in, he was spending vast sums of money, as much as £10,000 a year, buying properties, keeping up an expensive and luxurious establishment, and carrying himself in accordance with his dignity as a peer of the realm. The "valiant soldier and Captain of Christ," as Foxe styles him, was laying out great sums on gold and precious stones and fine raiment and furnishings lavishly between 1536 and 1540 ; he flung money about at cards and dice, and in entertaining the King. Politic, Thomas Cromwell may have been in all he did, but it

is impossible to doubt that when he despoiled the monastic Orders he took strict care to profit personally by his dealings with them. According to the Calendar of State Papers, *temp*. Henry VIII, money amounting to 28,000 crowns (= £7000) was found in his house when the King's archers under Mr. Cheyney went there to make an inventory after his arrest at the council board, and there also these searchers found an immense quantity of church plate, which, with the money, they removed there and then to the King's treasury—a transference of spoil from a lesser to a far greater robber.

CHAPTER IX

THE YEAR FIFTEEN-THIRTY-SIX

1. The Commission.

Cromwell received his commission as Visitor-General of the monasteries in January 1535, but it was not until the end of the following summer that active steps were taken to put it into force. He could not, of course, do the work himself, but he certainly made some preliminary investigations on his own account. From the end of July to the beginning of October he was with the King in the South and West of England; according to Chapuys, the Spanish Ambassador, the ostensible object of this expedition was the cultivation of the acquaintance of Henry's subjects in those parts of the country—with some sporting diversions thrown in—but there is no doubt that both the King and his Minister visited many of the religious houses in the course of their travels, being desirous of ascertaining for themselves what the prospects of the visitation were likely to be. Already—by August—two of Cromwell's agents were at work in Wiltshire; these were Legh and Ap-Rice; by autumn, two others, Layton and London, had been appointed, and before the end of 1535 all four were actively engaged in the task involved in Cromwell's formal commission.

2. Character of the Visitors.

It is a remarkable fact that historians and inquirers agree remarkably well on the question of the character, veracity, and good faith of these principal agents in

Cromwell's work of destruction. Without doubt they were men of distinctly bad character—the sort of men who would be chosen by an unscrupulous man to carry out unscrupulous designs. From Fuller, in his time, to Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, in ours, no writer on the period has a good word to say for them. "The inquisitors," says Fuller, "were men who well understood the message they were sent on, and would not come back without a satisfactory answer to him who sent them, knowing themselves to be no losers thereby." "Seldom in the world's history," remarks a writer in the *Athenæum*, November 1886, in a review of Dr. Gairdner's *Letters and Papers, temp.* Henry VIII, "has a tyrant found baser instruments for his basest designs than Henry found for carrying out the visitation of the English monasteries. . . . That any monastery in England contained half a dozen such wretches as the more prominent of the visitors who came to despoil them is almost inconceivable. . . . The reader is in danger of disbelieving everything that these men report in his indignation at the audacious and manifest lying which characterizes their reports." "The character of witnesses must always form an important element in estimating the value of their testimony, and the character of such obscene, profligate, and perjured witnesses as Layton and London could not well be worse," says Blunt, in his work on the *Reformation.* Froude, in his general whitewashing of Henry and his myrmidons, admits that it has been proved that Legh and Layton, especially in Yorkshire, "bore themselves with overwhelming insolence," and that they were known "to have taken bribes, and when bribes were not offered, to have extorted them." "There are grave reasons," says Gairdner, most dependable of all modern writers on the period, "for suspecting the whole of these *comperts* [the visitors' reports] to be a gross exaggeration. Nor can we well believe that visitors cared much about truth who did their work so hurriedly." "The *character*

of the visitors," says Green, "the sweeping nature of their report, and the long debate which followed on its reception, leaves little doubt that the charges were grossly exaggerated." Coming down to a very modern opinion, Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher says, "The way had been paved for the Dissolution by a rapid visitation of the monasteries, got up by Cromwell in the previous year. It was conducted by three violent, arrogant ruffians, whose commission undoubtedly was designed to 'get up a case' against the monks." Altogether, we may conclude that Cromwell's visitors were thoroughly bad, unscrupulous men, liars of the first water, whose first purpose was to serve their master; whose second, to line their own pockets.

3. Their Careers.

But let us see who they were. Richard Layton was a Cumberland man, the son of William Layton of Dalemain. He was educated and took holy orders at Cambridge. He held the sinecure rectory of Stepney; he was a pluralist and held another living at Brington. He was later on a clerk in Chancery; still later he was appointed Clerk to the Privy Council. He was employed by Cromwell in July 1535 to conduct a visitation of the University of Oxford. He solicited Cromwell to give him the visitorship of the northern monasteries, and arrived in Yorkshire for this purpose in January 1536. His unpopularity in the North was as great as his undoubted activity. He reaped considerable profit to himself out of his work, and was further rewarded by being appointed Dean of York in July 1539. "Upon him," says Dr. Raine, "in the opinion of many, rested the obloquy of seizing the great relique of York Minster, the head of St. William, or rather, the jewelled case in which it was enshrined." He did not long enjoy his ill-gotten gains: he died at Brussels in June 1544. Sir Thomas Legh is believed to have been a member of the well-known family of the Leghs of Lyme, on the

Cheshire-Derbyshire border. He had held several official appointments in London before Cromwell appointed him as visitor. He accompanied Layton to York in 1536, and was, if anything, more active and violent than his coadjutor. He, too, profited by his work, and got the grant of the great Augustinian Priory of Nostell. Knighted in May 1544, he died in the following year, and was buried at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch. Dr. John London was a Buckinghamshire man, a native of Hambledon. Educated at Oxford, he, at one time, after some preferment had come to him, was noted at Oxford for his assiduity in hunting out and bitterly persecuting Protestants and students suspected of heretical tendencies. He, like Layton, was a pluralist, holding the livings of Ewelme and Adderbury ; he also held prebends in the cathedrals of Lincoln and York. The most violent, grasping, and cruel of Cromwell's agents, he profited considerably by his work, but in the end he became involved in financial difficulties, was convicted of perjury, and after standing in the pillory, was thrown into the Fleet Prison, where he died in 1543. Sir John Ap-Rice was a Welsh lawyer, who appears to have entered Cromwell's service in 1535. He was appointed a visitor in the following year. His concerns were not particularly with the North. Cromwell endeavoured, as a reward for his services, to get him a lucrative appointment on the cathedral staff of Salisbury, but the dean and chapter protested so vigorously that the matter fell through. However, he secured a grant of the lands of the Priory of Brecknock, and presumably enjoyed his spoils until his death in 1573. He was the only one of the four principal visitors who survived the work of destruction more than a few years.

4. Relation with Each Other and Cromwell.

Some significant light is thrown on the characters of these men by the revelations of their relations towards each other and with Cromwell. There is a lengthy

correspondence in existence which shows that Ap-Rice sent secret reports to Cromwell, complaining of Legh, at that time his fellow-visitor. Legh, says Ap-Rice, is "a young man of intolerable elation." He goes about followed by twelve liveried servants; he dresses in the very height of the fashion. He browbeats and ill-treats the abbots and priors. He shamefully abused the Abbots of Bruton and Stanley, and the Prior of Bradstock, because they did not meet him at the doors of their houses. He is extortionate to the last degree, and Ap-Rice thinks murder will be done if he is permitted to go about in this way with his "rufflers." There are many other instances of one visitor "telling upon" another in this fashion. But in the case of Legh, Cromwell appears to have regarded Ap-Rice's complaints as so much valuable testimony to Legh's capabilities. Legh and Layton, indeed, were the very men he wanted—fit instruments for the work in hand. Moreover, they were his most devoted servants and sycophants, scrupling at nothing that would please him. They not only took bribes on his behalf, but bribed him themselves. There is a letter amongst the Cromwell Correspondence in the Record Office in which its writer, Layton, offers Cromwell £100 if he will get him the Chancellorship of Salisbury. As to their servility to Cromwell, it is amply proved by the general terms of their letters, in which the use of pious wishes and of Scriptural terms is repulsive. A letter of Layton's, quoted in the *Home and Foreign Review*, 1864, in which he invites Cromwell to visit him at his rectory, is a good specimen of his obsequiousness. "Surely," he writes, "Simeon was never so glad to see Christ his master, as I shall be to see your lordship."

5. The Instructions: Open and Secret.

What were the orders and instructions given to these men? On the mere surface, they were simple enough and plausible enough. They were to visit the various

religious houses, inquire into their present condition, and the state of their inmates, and report accordingly to the Visitor-General. Nothing was to be allowed to interfere with their business; in September 1535 Cromwell issued a Prohibitory Letter in the King's name, forbidding the bishops to visit any monastery, or to exercise any jurisdiction, during the visitation of the monastic houses then in progress. The visitors, therefore, had a clear field. But behind the open instructions, there were secret ones, imparted, no doubt, in private, by Cromwell himself. The visitors were to make out a strong case for the report already contemplated. Where there were no causes of complaint they were to devise them. Where there were causes they were to exaggerate them. Whatever else they did they were to hand in a report which would justify Cromwell in his contemplated proceedings. He had, of course, material already in hand. The general falling off in tone of the religious houses was undoubted. The monastic Orders had degenerated. The friars had become little better than religious mendicants. There was much laxity. Here and there, without doubt, there was immorality—sharply checked and punished by superiors, it is certain, but existing to some—probably very small — degree. And the notorious case of St. Albans, and of Warham's charges against it, was still in men's minds—so, too, were other cases. There was, in short, a general impression abroad that things were not right with the religious houses, therefore, the visitors had a plausible groundwork for the report which Cromwell desired them to make; all they had to do was to heighten and exaggerate any laxities or shortcomings, especially as regards morals and conduct. But there were still other secret instructions. The end to be kept in view was the suppression of the houses, and the securing of their possessions for the Crown. If the visitors could induce peaceable surrender by cajolery, bribes, the offer of pensions, let them. But in any

case Cromwell must be furnished with a report which would justify him in appealing to Parliament for permission to carry out the work he had in mind. The religious houses must go—all he wanted was an excuse for their dismissal.

6. Layton and Legh in Yorkshire.

So now we come to the descent of Cromwell's visitors upon Yorkshire, and upon the eight Cistercian communities situate in that county. In the early autumn of 1535 Layton was pursuing his work in the South of England; his thoughts turned to the North. He addressed the following letter to Cromwell, the exact date of which is unknown, but it was probably written in September:

> Please yor goodnes to understonde that forasmoche as Yorke dioces was not visite sens my Lord Cardinales [Wolsey] tyme and many thynges therbe within the saide province now much nedefull of reformacion and worthy redresse. If yt myghte please you therfore nowe to send me into the said province and Blitheman yor servant to be regestre we myght well finisshe all that province by Michaelmas or sone after.
>
> Richard Layton

It is very evident that the news of what was about to happen was spreading through Yorkshire at this time, and at once the clamours of would-be sharers in the monastic spoils begin to be heard. Cromwell begins to be supplicated for appointment. On September 24, 1535, Sir George Lawson, Knight, of York, Treasurer of Berwick, writes to him. He has heard of the visitation that is about to take place—he has heard, too, that temporal persons are to be employed in the surveying and receipt of the monastic lands. So he hastens to ask for a post for himself, old man as he confesses himself to be. "Therfor," he writes, "like you to be so goode to me as to help and name me to sum and suche of those rowmes or offices as ye thynke convenyent

and as it may stand with your pleasor." If his request is granted he will daily pray for the King and for Cromwell. This is only the first of scores of such letters—one gets the idea that every squire in Yorkshire was eager to get something. But there is other correspondence of another sort. The heads of houses, summoned to acknowledge the royal behests, were courageous enough in some instances to offer reasons against such a course. William, Prior of Bridlington, being at the time, he says, "detende with diverse infirmities in my body, and in lyke maner feeble of nature," writes on October 23, 1535, to Cromwell, who had demanded that he should recognize the King's highness as patron and founder, beseeching "your gude maistershipe to be gude maister to me and your poour cotidiall oratours, my brethren, for notwithstandinge the kinges grace his noble progenitours titles and clames heretofore mayde . . . we have ever benne dismissed clere without any interruption in this behalfe nighe this two hundredth yeres." But appeals to the past had no weight with Cromwell, whose concern was the affairs of the present, to be carried out with effect and speed.

7. At York.

Layton and Legh journeyed to Yorkshire in January 1536, and early in the month each writes to Cromwell—Layton on the 13th, Legh on the next day. Layton at once reports (though he and his fellow-visitor had not been in the county many hours) that "here in Yorkshire we fynde gret corruption emongiste persons religious," and proceeds to make charges of an especially vile nature, which he expresses in Latin. This day, he goes on to say, they begin their work with St. Mary's Abbey in York, where—before ever going there—"we suppos to fynde muche evile disposition both in the abbot and the convent, whereoff, Gode wylling, I shall certify yowe in my next letters." He winds up by saying that "no corruption or lucre" shall make him swerve from his

loyalty. Legh, in his letter, tells Cromwell that Layton and himself have been with the Archbishop of York, "injoyninge him to preache and teache the word of God." But they enjoined on His Grace something else, which, we may be sure, was more pertinent—namely, to presently produce to Cromwell his titles to his offices and prerogatives, with his grants, privileges, and concessions—in the which, adds Legh, when Cromwell has read them, "I doo not dowte but that you shall see and rede many things worthy reformation." One may imagine the state of mind in which prelates of high rank received these visitors, who, with all the insolence of Jack-in-office, demanded the accounts of their stewardship with threats and rudeness.

8. At Fountains.

On January 19, 1536, Layton and Legh were at Fountains, and secured the resignation of William Thyrske, the abbot, to whom was granted an annual pension of one hundred marks. Next day they conjointly write a letter to Cromwell about the abbot: it is an admirable specimen of the style of their communications. William Thyrske, they report, is in truth a very fool and a miserable idiot. He has greatly dilapidated the house. He has wasted the woods. It is notorious that he has six mistresses—needless to say they describe these mythical persons in less polite terms. He has committed theft and sacrilege. He recently caused his chaplain to purloin the sexton's keys, and then stole a jewel from the sacristy, a cross of gold set with precious stones. He had with him at the time one Warren, a goldsmith of the Chepe in London; he and Warren further stole an emerald and a ruby; Warren made the abbot believe the ruby to be nothing but a garnet, so only paid twenty pounds for it. Also the abbot sold plate to Warren without properly weighing it. But they have made him resign. And now they have an offer to make. If the Earl of Cumberland, they say, only knew

that the abbacy was vacant, he would labour to get it for the cellarer. But they know the man. He is one of the monks, Marmaduke Bradley, who is also a prebendary of Ripon, "a welthie felowe." He will give Cromwell six hundred marks for the appointment and pay at once. The firstfruits to the King is a thousand pounds; Bradley, if Cromwell will appoint him, will pay it within three years. And so on, and so on—the knavery of the men and of their master is apparent in every line. Nor was there much of the old Cistercian simplicity and purpose in Marmaduke Bradley, who already enjoyed a prebend at Ripon worth some six hundred a year of our money, and who was duly appointed by Cromwell, and was the last—and the most unworthy—Abbot of Fountains.

9. Marmaduke Bradley.

Being duly appointed, Bradley begins a correspondence with Cromwell, whom he addresses as his "ryght honorable and singulre good maister" who shall be assured of his "continuall praiers and service." On March 6, 1536, he writes a long letter to the Vicar-General about his predecessor, Abbot William Thyrske, who has, he says, left great decay behind him, both in plant, sheep, woods, and other store of Fountains. "Of verey treuth," he continues, "I fynd never one peny with in this howse nor yet to recevey afore May day"—therefore he asks Cromwell's assistance. Moreover, he says, the late abbot ought not to have any pension until he has rendered his accounts and restored the money that lies in his hands. Even then he ought not to have a pension of forty pounds, "for we have a statute in our *Religion de Abb't Resignante*, and that is this 'Abbas qui bene rexerit per decennium habent competentem pensionem.'" He adds further complaints against Thyrske: it is very evident that he had been conspiring against him before ever Layton and Legh came to Fountains. On March 21 he writes again to Cromwell, who has suggested that

he should give up his prebend of Ripon, which Cromwell evidently wishes to bestow elsewhere. Bradley is firm enough on this point. "Trewly, sir," he says, "I never maid promisse to resigne the same, and of veray trewthe this howse yt I am preferred in is so farre in danger all maner of ways, that I have rather will to resigne the Abbotship then my prebend. For no displeasure to your good maistership, I have sufficient dispensacion to have both the Abbotship and the prebend, and rather than I resign the prebend I will utterly resigne the Abbotship." The truth was that Bradley, who was in close touch with Layton and Legh, knew well that Fountains was doomed, and that its days could not possibly last much longer: he had doubtless been secretly told by the visitors that he would be able to enjoy his abbacy for a few years, but that the house would then share the fate of the smaller foundations, and he chose to stand by his comfortable prebend; that, at any rate, seeming to be more secure than his new appointment. We hear no more of his being asked to resign from Ripon, and he held prebend and abbacy until the end.

10. Layton and Legh's Itinerary.

And now Layton and Legh began that hurried journey through Yorkshire of which an account is furnished in a letter, dated February 28, 1536. This letter was probably written by Blythman, one of Cromwell's underlings, who seems to have accompanied them as registrar and secretary. Surely no more hurried journey was ever made. It is impossible that the visitors could have stayed long at any of the houses visited, for within a very short time they covered the whole county, from east to west, from north to south. They must, on their own showing, have travelled several hundreds of miles, yet they accomplished the entire journey, visited scores of houses in places far apart, and made their investigations and examinations, and took the opinions of the

neighbouring folk, within one month—and that in the very middle of winter: the feat would be difficult to perform in these days of railways and automobiles. And the probability is that they literally sped from one house to another, made the most perfunctory inquiry at each, took no opinions at all from the neighbours, and contented themselves by setting out a bare record of their journeyings, accompanied by a certain document which we will presently consider. As to their visits to the various Cistercian houses, this is all that is recorded in Blythman's letter:

Item from there [Newburgh] to Bylond, off the order off the Cystercyensis, of ye same fundacion that the foresayd monastery whas and hys off and yt the second yeer after ye fundacion of Newbrarow whos sepulcre ys in the chaptyrouss wyndow off thyss monastery off ye forsayd lord Mowbray and his wyff on myle from [thence].

Item to Ryvalles, monkys off the Cystercyene order off ye fyrst fundacon off Walter Especke, now my Lord Rosse ys ther fundar.

Item to Mewsse Abbey off ye Cystercyenes, off ye fundacon off le Grosse sum tyme yerle off Albymarle.

Item to Chrystall abbey of the Cystercyenes off the furst fundacyon off Sr. Patffyld Pictaviensis, knyght.

Item to Salley Abbey of ye Cystercyenes, off the furst fundacon of Lord Wyllym Percy ye thyrd after the conquest in ye year off our Lord 1140.

Item to Gervalles, off ye Cystercyenes, apon Your [Uri] flewd, fundyd sumtyme in another place now callyd Wensdale by Lord Akar but afterwardes by lord Conanne, sonne to Alanne, yerle off Rychmond, ye monkes were removed fro' that place onto this forsayd Gervalles by ye forsayd yeerles sonne and yt by the lycence off the sonn of ye lord Akarrs callyd Hervey, and yt was in ye yeer off our Lord 1157 ye xv yere off Kyng Stephanne, then after was fundar lord Fytheus [Fitzhugh] now Master Pare ys ther fundar.

Item to Fountens abbey off ye cystercienes, off the fundacon off Threstonne sumtyme byshope off Yorke which weer in the yeer off our Lord 1132.

Item to Roche Abbey off the Cystercienes, off Lord Buell and Turgett now Lord Clyfford ys ther fundar.

II. The "Comperta."

It will be observed that this is nothing but a mere itinerary, extracted from the rest. But with this was sent to Cromwell a secret document containing the foulest and vilest charges against the monastic Orders, both monks and nuns, which is not fit for publication. This is what Dr. Gairdner has to say of its probabilities as a veracious document: "Legh and Layton . . . had transmitted piecemeal reports of what they called their *comperta* in the Southern houses to Cromwell. For the province of York . . . they made up a *Compendium compertorium* of most extraordinary foulness. . . . If we are to believe these 'comperts' . . . a large proportion of the monasteries of England were little better than brothels. There were even nuns who had had children, and in several instances by priests. Some of these cases may be accounted for by the fact that ladies had found retreats in religious houses after personal misfortune and disgrace; and no doubt there were other scandals here and there. But [the next two sentences have been previously quoted] there are grave reasons for suspecting the whole of these 'comperts' to be a gross exaggeration. Nor can we well believe that visitors cared much about truth, who did their work so hurriedly. Certain it is that many of the houses which stood worst in their reports were afterwards declared to bear a fair character by gentlemen of the neighbourhood, specially commissioned afterwards to report on them for other purposes. Moreover, we know that the visitors' reports to Cromwell were secret, and had a distinct object in view."

With the itinerary and the "comperts" was forwarded another document, from which some extracts may be given without offence, though the thing in its entirety bears evidence of the foulness of mind in which it originated. One of the instructions given to Layton and Legh by Cromwell was that they should search for

special objects of superstition. They forwarded a list of such objects which they professed to have discovered in Yorkshire. It is a curious feature of this list that—according to it—nearly every such object of superstition related to one thing, and one thing only—safety in childbirth. It is a curious thing, too, that in the available records of the houses said to possess these objects there is no mention of any such possession. The only conclusion one can come to, after considering the evidence, is that in this list, too, what was not fabrication was exaggeration—the whole document bears the marks of invention. As to the objects of superstition found at the Cistercian houses, they were set down as follows :

At Roche—an Image of Christ Crucified.
At Meaux—a cingulum of St. Bernard, sometimes lent to pregnant women.
At Rievaulx—a girdle of St. Aelred, helpful to lying-in women.
At Fountains—a girdle of Our Lady.
At Jervaulx—a girdle of Our Lady, safe for lying-in women.
At Kirkstall—a cingulum for pregnancy.

12. The Imaginary "Black Book."

Now we come to the matter of the famous Black Book, concerning which there has been much controversy. Layton and Legh concluded their visitation about the end of February 1536. Henry VIII's Long Parliament was just then assembled for what was to be its last session. According to some writers—Froude amongst them—the charges brought by Cromwell's agents against the monastic Orders were set forth in a document called the Black Book, which was produced to the members of that Parliament, and produced so much disgust that one and all demanded that monks and nuns should be swept away forthwith. Also, according to these writers, this Black Book was in existence until the reign of Queen Mary, who, they say, caused it to be destroyed. On this point we will take the evidence of Dr. Gairdner, as the most expert authority we can turn to. "Writers

of a later generation," he says (*History of the English Church*, iv, 166–67), "speak of a certain Black Book, supposed to have been produced in this Parliament, which contained a register of monastic enormities; but there is no appearance that any document of the kind ever existed except the *Compendium compertorium*, and certainly this, in which some of the largest monasteries were the worst defamed, affords no warrant for the extraordinary insinuation that vice prevailed invariably where the numbers fell below twelve, and that the great monasteries were better regulated. So it is evident that the Parliament took the King's word as to the character of the disclosures, and passed the Bill because they were required to do so. Nothing else alleged to have been discovered in the monasteries could really have gone before Parliament or the public except certain vague statements that immoralities were practised in a large number of houses."

13. Act of Suppression of Smaller Houses.

The Bill to which reference is here made was brought before Parliament on February 4, 1536, and was quickly passed into law. No accurate account of the proceedings is available, and it is not known if there was any opposition to the measure—27 Henry VIII, cap. 28—which is entitled, "An Acte concernynge the suppression or dyssolucon of certeyne Relygyous houses and given to the kinges highnes and to his heres for ever." The preamble runs as follows—and it must be remembered in reading it that the measure was based on the in part wholly false, in part grossly exaggerated, reports of Layton and Legh:

Forasmuch as manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living, is daily used and committed among the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, where the congregation of such religious persons is under the number of twelve, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convents spoil, consume, destroy, and

utterly waste their churches, monasteries, principal houses, farms, and granges, to the high displeasure of Almighty God, the slander of true religion, and to the great infamy of the King's Highness and of the realm, if redress should not be had thereof; and albeit that many continual visitations hath been heretofore had by the space of two hundred years and more, for all honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living; yet nevertheless, little or no amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth, and by a cursed custom is so rooted and infested, that a great multitude of the religious persons in such small houses do rather choose to rove abroad in apostasy than to conform them to the observation of true religion; so that without such small houses be utterly suppressed, and the religious persons therein committed to great and honourable monasteries of religion in this realm, where they may be compelled to live religiously for the reformation of their lives, there can be no reformation in this behalf: in consideration hereof, the King's most royal Majesty, being Supreme Head on Earth, under God, of the Church of England, daily finding and devising the increase, advancement, and exaltation of true doctrine and virtue in the said Church, to the only glory of God, and the total extirpating and destruction of vice and sin; having knowledge that the premises be true, as well by accounts of his late visitation as by sundry credible informations; considering also that divers great monasteries of this realm, wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed, be destitute of such full numbers of religious persons as they ought and may keep: hath thought good that a plain declaration should be made of the premises, as well to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal as to other his loving subjects the Commons in this present Parliament assembled. Whereupon, the said Lords and Commons, by a great deliberation, finally be resolved that it is and shall be much more to the pleasure of Almighty God, and for the honour of this his Realm, that the possessions of such spiritual houses, now spent, and spoiled, and wasted for increase and maintenance of sin, should be converted to better uses; and the unthrifty religious persons so spending the same be compelled to reform their lives.

14. Inconsistencies.

There are certain—obvious—observations to be made on this preamble. The fixing of a definite number of inmates—twelve—shows an arbitrary design. The number of religious houses coming within its purpose was considerable—so were the possessions of such houses. Many of the Yorkshire houses came just within the £200 limit: the design was, of course, to sweep them into the net. The complaint is only laid against the *small* houses. But the reports of Layton and Legh are chiefly addressed against the *great* houses, spoken of in the preamble as "great and honourable," and, later, as places wherein "religion is right well kept and observed." Obviously there is a contradiction here; and if the persons complained of were so far gone in "carnal and abominable living," why introduce them into communities admittedly free from the vices which the folk to be admitted were accused of practising? Altogether, this preamble bears the marks of as much falsity as was evidenced in the reports on which it was based.

15. Provisions of the Act.

Parliament, however, gave no attention to these inconsistencies. It passed preamble and provisions evidently without question. The provisions were drastic. The lands and possessions of all religious houses having an income of less than £200 a year were to be given to the King. The dispossessed were either to be distributed amongst the greater houses, or turned out on the world "with permission to live honestly and virtuously." "Some convenient charity" was to be allowed them. Superiors were to be given a pension in accordance with their degree. All debts were to be paid—out of the suppressed house's means, of course. Finally, thirty-two houses were to be allowed a little longer life—at the King's discretion. As to the pensions, the ordinary

members received about four pounds; the superiors, nominally, about sixty.

16. Court of Augmentations.

At the same time was passed an Act (27 Henry VIII, cap. 27) for establishing a Court of Augmentations. It set forth that the King having now had secured to him, his heirs, and successors for ever, the lands, rents, tithes, pensions, hereditaments, ornaments, jewels, goods, cattle, and debts of the houses affected in the accompanying Act, all such properties should be handed over to a court of record having a great seal and a privy seal, and consisting of certain officials duly named and appointed. The next thing was to appoint commissioners to examine the monasteries affected, and to take possession of their property. On April 24, 1536, certain persons were duly appointed as commissioners for Yorkshire. They were Sir Ralph Ellerker the younger, knight; Sir Marmaduke Constable, knight; Sir George Lawson, knight (Cromwell had evidently not forgotten his application of the previous September); Sir Roger Cholmley the elder, knight; and William Bapthorpe, Robert Challoner, Leonard Beckwith, and Hugh Fuller, esquires. They received their instructions at the same time, and forthwith began their work. In the Cotton MSS. there is a list of the Yorkshire houses which came under their control. Some were very poor. Nunburnholme was only worth £8 1*s.* 11*d.*; Yedingham, only £21 16*s.*; Esholt, only £13 5*s.* 4*d.*; Arthington, only £11 8*s.* 4½*d.* But others came near the £200 standard. Holy Trinity, York, was worth £169 9*s.* 10*d.*; Marton, £151 5*s.* 4*d.*; the Charterhouse at Hull, £174 18*s.* 3*d.*; Warter, £143 7*s.* 8*d.*; Malton, £197 19*s.* 2*d.*; Coverham, £160 18*s.* 3*d.* Out of the nearly fifty Yorkshire houses dissolved in 1536 the spoils must have been considerable.

17. The Rush for the Spoil.

And now began—or made itself openly manifest—the rush of those anxious and ravenous to have their share. Nothing is more noticeable, nothing more revolting in the whole history of the Suppression, than the greed shown on all sides by the Yorkshire gentry of that day. Perhaps, however, there is something still more revolting—the sickening, sycophantic tone of their letters to Cromwell. Let us read some of these letters: Mr. Clay prints several of them in his *Suppression Papers*. Here is a typical one from Sir George Darcy, eldest son of the Thomas Lord Darcy, who was executed for his share in the Pilgrimage of Grace. This George Darcy was subsequently restored to the title as Lord Darcy of Aston. He had married Dorothy Melton, a descendant of the Hiltons, sometime lords of Swine.

April 1, 1536

After my most dewe and humble recommendations unto your honourable maistership, pleasith it yow to be advertised, I have written to the kynges maiestie to be good and gracious lorde unto me as concernynge the preferrement of the nonery of Swyne Abbay, whereof my wif is foundres after the decesse of hir father, besechyng your honorable maistership of your lovyng favour therin that I may haue the preferrement thereof either in ferme or otherwise as may stand with your pleasure and help, and if there be any pleasure or service I may doo yow commaunde me as yowr owyn. Syr, I require yow to gyve credence to my brother, Syr Arthure Darcy therein. Wrytten at Gayforth the first day of Aprile by your assured and most feythfull frend and his poor George Darcy, Kt.

18. Sir Henry Everingham.

Here is another from Sir Henry Everingham, head of an old family which had been settled at Birkin for many generations.

April 4, 1536

Ryght Wyrshypfull . . . yff ther be or shalbe eny such direcon takyn for abbays that temporall men shal have eny

comodyte therby I desyer yor maystershyppe for my preferment in thatt behalfe, to conclude ther be also dyvers abbays in thys contre whyche haue had certayn landes goven theym by myn ansytorys for certayn dewtyes whyche they haue omytted and neclecytt wherein also I desyer yor maystershypp off yor gud and favorable helpe, and I shall gladly accordyng my lyttyll power desire yor gentyll kyndnes therin and yor furthur pleasur.

HENRY EVERINGHAM

19. SIR JOHN NEVILE.

Four days later Sir John Nevile, a younger son of Sir John Nevile of Liversedge, and founder of the Chevet branch of that very ancient family, writes to Cromwell with a fulsome show of flattery and far too many pious wishes to be wholly sincere.

April 8, 1536

Ryght honerabull my speciall and singuler good Mr I hertely comende me to you, desyring to her of your good prossperes helthe of the wyche I besych Jhesu long to contenew to hys plesur your hartye desyre and cumford, thankyng your mrshyp for your kyndnes shewyd to me at altymes, for the wyche I am bond to hon to you my services so long ows leyff, ser, plesys hyt your mastershyp to understand that wer ows hyt hys let me to be acertenyd that Ser Thomas Wyntwort, knyght marscall, hathe grant of the kyngys hyghnes of the priore of Ampall for hys monay, Ser, in the honor of God be so good mr to my son Gerves Clyfton, on of the kyngys wardes whyche I hade of the kyng for on of my doghters, that he may have hyt for hys monay, ows anoder man schall, and he schal fynd sufficiant suretie for the perfyrmacion of all syche comandys ows you schall demand of hym, for hys ancetors have beyn euermor fonders of that plaise, wer for in the honor of God be so good Mr to me and to my son that he may have hyt, doyng for the kyngys avanteg so larghe ows a nother man wyl do, and you schalbe ows sure of hym and me next unto the kyng ows to one man levyng the deys of owr lyeff. Ser, I umbly desyre you to pardon me that I am so bold to besyche your mastershyp to haue me in rememberans emonges all other for Wallyng Wellys ows I wrot to Mr Richard your [nephew] or some thyng hellys that hyt schall plesse your maystershyp to help me to, ows as knowys Jhesu so haue you in hys blessyd kepyng.

JOHN NEVYELL, Kt.

20. Archbishop Lee's Request.

It was not only knights of the shire and country squires who desired to have a share in the spoil or to put forward claims in respect of lands given by their ancestors to the Church. Even the Archbishop of York, Lee, does not think it beneath him to humbly sue the Vicar-General for his favour, though, to be sure, it is not for himself that he pleads, but in defence of the privileges of his See.

S^r^ [he writes to Cromwell, April 23, 1536] I entierlie praye you to bee good to me for ij places of the patronaige of the Archbusshopes of Yorke, that if you shall thinke opon suche considerations as I shall alledge, that I haue reason to sue for them, that you will helpe me with your good word, that theye bee not suppressed. The tone of them named Saincte Oswaldes is not of foundation a monasterie of religiouse men but is *libera capella archiepiscopi*. No man hath title in it but the archbushoppe; the prior thereof in removable at my pleasure and accomptable to me, and the archbushoppe maye put there, if he woll, secular prestes, and so wold I have doone at my entre, if I had not ther founde oone of myne acquayntaunce, whome I judged meete to bee ther undre mee. . . . The toodre is called Hexham upon the borders of Scotland.

Yor owne ever assured
Edouarde Ebor

21. Sir William Gascoigne.

The Archbishop's entreaty saved neither Nostell Priory (the St. Oswald's to which he refers) nor Hexham. Nor did a joint letter written by Sir Ralph Ellerker the younger, M. Constable, Leonard Beckwith, and Hugh Fuller to Cromwell from Swine, on May 28, avail the Carthusians of Hull, for whom it pleaded. Few pleas were made to the Vicar-General on behalf of the threatened communities: most of the letters sent to him betray the writers' eagerness to get something for themselves. Here is another typical request—from Sir William Gascoigne—which, by the by, was unsuccessful,

as the grant he asked for was eventually made to Lord Latimer.

June 17, 1536

. . . I most humbly desyr yor mastership to be good master unto me that if the abbay callyd Nonmonkton, which is a nunnery and of my ancestors fondacon, goo to the Kinges Augmentacon thatt I may haue the preferment therof, paying to the Kynges grace as muych as oder wyll. And also I humbly desyr yor mastership to be good master to me in all my causes, and if ther be any service that I can do yor mastership I shalbe att yor commaundement att all tyme as knoweth Almighty God whom kepe you long in helth.

By yours at all your comandement,

WILLIAM GASCOIGNE

22. THE EARL OF WESTMORLAND.

Finally—in our specimens of requests—Ralph Nevile, fourth Earl of Westmorland, puts in his plea, in which he was successful.

1536

Sir, I beseche you haue me in remembrans touching thabbay of Blaunchlond and the pryorye of the nonnes of Keldhom and my old suyte, and I wolle do therfor as any other wolle.

23. SUPPRESSION OF SALLEY: 1536.

According to the lists given in the Appendix to Gairdner's *History of the English Church in the Sixteenth Century*, 215 houses of men were suppressed in 1536, and 103 houses of women. Of these several obtained licences to continue, but they shared in the fate of all the other houses in 1538–39–40. Out of the 215 houses of men, forty were of the Cistercian Order. But of the eight Cistercian houses in Yorkshire, only one fell in 1536. Gairdner, indeed, includes it in the list of houses suppressed by attainder in 1537. But Mr. Clay in his *Suppression Papers* of the Yorkshire monasteries, gives the date definitely as 1536, and in the accounts of the Receiver, Leonard Beckwith, made out from the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel 1535 to the same feast

1536, he speaks of the goods, lead, and bells as having been already sold to Sir Arthur Darcy, knight. The particulars in the *Suppression Papers* are few. The abbey is stated to have been founded by William, third Lord Percy. The reason for its suppression is that it is not worth £200 per annum. Its valuation is £147 3*s.* 10*d.* One pension is mentioned—that to Thomas Bolton, the twenty-third abbot (last abbot but one), who is to have £20 a year. According to Leonard Beckwith's accounts, Salley appears to have been poorest of all the Cistercian houses in Yorkshire, not only in revenue and possessions, but in such matters as plate and jewels, which he returns as of a total value of only £72.

24. The Affair at Hexham.

Long before the winter of 1536 came—indeed before autumn was fairly set in—the commissioners and receivers were hard at work in the destruction of these smaller houses. The plate, jewels, vestments, office books, furniture, and domestic goods were seized and removed; the lead and the bells were taken; the bare walls of cloister and church were in many instances at once turned into quarries, from whence farmers were permitted to fetch stone for the building or repairing of barns, granaries, stables, and pigsties. The country people without a doubt helped in the various spoliations, and at the same time resented the conduct of those primarily responsible for them. Ominous growlings began to be heard in the North—perhaps, at first, Cromwell heard nothing of them in London. But in September a certain event occurred in Northumberland which might have warned him of what was coming. The Priory of Hexham, for which Lee, Archbishop of York, had pleaded in vain to the Vicar-General, stood in the midst of a bleak and lonely country, and had shown itself to be of special value, not only to the people of its neighbourhood, but to travellers going into Scotland. When the news of the Dissolution came, the Northumberland folk

determined that nothing should be done at Hexham, and the Augustinian canons of the priory were encouraged to make armed resistance to Cromwell's agents. What followed is told by Raine in his *Priory of Hexham* (Surtees Society, vols. xliv–xlvi), in which he reprints a document giving the Government account of the rising. "Whereas," runs this account, "Lionel Gray, Robert Collingwood, William Green, and James Rokeby, commissioners for the dissolution of the monasteries within the county aforesaid [Northumberland], the 28th day of the month of September, in the 28th year of our sovereign lord King Henry VIII, associated with their ordinary company, were riding towards the said monastery of Hexham, there to execute the King's most dread commandment of dissolution . . . being in their journey at Delston, three miles from the same monastery, were credibly informed that the said religious persons had prepared them with guns and artillery meet for war, with people in the same house and to defend and keep the same with force." Gray and Collingwood rode on to Hexham, and arriving there, "did see many persons assembled with bills, halberts, and other defenceable weapons . . . the common bell of the town was rung," and the townsfolk assembled round the priory. One of the canons "being in harness" informed the commissioners that "we shall die all, or that ye shall have the house." Gray and Collingwood warned him, and went back; the commissioners retired to Corbridge. Next day "the canons, being all in harness, associated with a great company of tenants and servants . . . did issue forth of the monastery in defenceable array, by two together, all in harness, and so did walk from the monastery to a place called the green, towards where the commissioners did meet, and there stood in array with their weapons in their hands until the commissioners were past out of sight." So there was no dissolution of Hexham at that time, but not many months had elapsed before certain of the canons were hanged

at the gates of the house which they and the people of the town had resolved to defend.

25. Resistance at Salley.

Before this ominous incident took place something of a similar nature had happened at Salley, where the Cistercians began the resistance which eventually resulted in the execution of three of the Cistercian abbots of Yorkshire. The first turning out of the community at Salley appears to have taken place early in May, but before the rising at Hexham, the Abbot of Salley and his monks, some twenty in number, had been forcibly restored by the men of the neighbourhood, who, according to an account in the Chapter House Book, wherein Salley is spoken of as being "the charitable relief of these parts," and standing in a mountain country and among their forests, bound themselves together, in company with certain other folk of the Lancashire and Westmorland borders, to resist any further attempts on the part of the commissioners. The Earl of Derby marched across to Craven to put down this insurrection, and in October the King himself writes to him about Salley, giving him instructions of the nature of which he leaves no doubt. He is to go with all his forces to the "bordures of Lancasher," and especially "to the said abbey of Salley . . . and if you shall find the late abbot and monks thereof remaining in the possession of the house . . . we will that ye take the said abbot and monks with their assistants forth with violence, and without any manner of delay, in their monks apparel cause them to be hanged up as right arrant traitors and movers of insurrection and sedition, accordingly having special regard throughout all the country and parts about yu that no towne or village begin to assemble or gather together, but that they may with the sword be immediately repressed to the terrible example of all others." The hand is Henry's, but the spirit is Cromwell's, who doubtless insisted on a rigorous carrying out of his

policy, and at the same time was probably secretly pleased that these minor outbreaks would give him reasonable excuse for further dissolutions. That the Earl of Derby did not carry out these instructions there and then, however, is proved by the fact that the Cistercians were still in possession—in some sort—in the following February, when Henry wrote again commanding that they "be tied up without further delay or ceremony." But in the meantime the first of the Northern rebellions had broken out and been crushed by statecraft and cunning, and with all the savagery of which Henry was capable.

CHAPTER X

THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

1. Diversity of Causes.

The armed rebellion which broke out in the North of England in the autumn of 1536, and was taken part in by men of every rank of society, from the proudest peer to the meanest peasant, sprang from more than one cause. It has come to be chiefly regarded as an insurrection arising from religious differences: in truth, its causes were various. Certainly, religion was the principal one. The folk of the North were sincerely attached to the old forms and ways of religion: to their simple minds the recent events suggested the utter extirpation of the faith which their forefathers had associated with the names of Hilda of Whitby, and Cuthbert of Durham, and Wilfrid of Ripon, and a hundred North Country saints. They saw the smaller religious houses stripped and desecrated; they became aware that the same fate was in store for the greater ones; when their turn had come and gone, it would, said many, be the turn of the minsters of York and Beverley, and Ripon, and of the parish churches in which so many generations had taken such pride. The coarseness and violence of Cromwell's agents and commissioners during the summer of 1536 had produced a terrible impression. Men whose piety was deep set had seen the agents' followers ride through the villages and valleys tricked out in the sacred vestments which they had torn from sacristies, and often from the celebrants at the altars; they had heard of the beating of church

plate into hilts for swords. They had stood by and seen the religious turned out homeless and penniless, and a rising flood of indignation had gradually swept across the country, from the Irish Channel to the North Sea, and from Trent to Tweed. In the whole of ancient Northumbria, Henry, in the October of 1536, probably had not one loyal subject in a thousand.

2. Discontent of the Nobles.

But there were other matters. The upper classes of the North were seething with discontent. Discontent, indeed, had existed amongst them for some time. They had been tyrannically treated by the Crown in the days of Wolsey: they had seen Wolsey fall, and themselves faced with a far worse tyrant in his one-time servant, Thomas Cromwell. Lord Darcy put the matter in plain words when he turned with sudden fierceness on the Vicar-General as they stood at the Council table. "It is thou, Cromwell, that art the very special and chief cause of all this rebellion and wickedness, and dost daily travail to bring us to our ends and strike off our heads. I trust that ere thou die, though thou wouldst procure all the noblest heads in the kingdom to be stricken off, yet there shall one head remain that shall strike off thy head!" The striking off of the heads of the North Country noblemen was, indeed, part of the policy of Henry and his Minister. Percies and Neviles, Howards and Montagues, all were to be wiped out. Norfolk himself, sent first to do work on them, was destined for their fate when he had served the tyrant's purpose. It was, in essence, a vendetta, this campaign against the great houses of the North; a final chapter in that book of English history which began before the Wars of the Roses. Not a nobleman north of Trent but felt the tyranny of the King, and suffered from the cold, calculating designs of the Minister—the power of the religious Orders was not more surely slipping away from

its holders than the old privileges of their rank were being ruthlessly torn from the peers.

3. Discontent of the Commons.

While the Churchmen and the noblemen had their grievances, the gentry and the poor folk had theirs. In 1536 the country gentlemen—a very considerable portion of the community in the North—were smarting under the provisions of the recently passed Statute of Uses. By the common law of England it had not been allowed to leave real estate—landed property—to any but the eldest son or his successor. This had been evaded by employing uses—the property left to the eldest was saddled with the duty of paying a portion to the use of the younger sons. Much confusion had arisen. There had been uses on lives. The Statute of Uses enacted that the holder of the use should be declared owner of the property, and for his benefit legislative title was created, and at the same time uses were forbidden. This law was subsequently altered, but for the time being the landed gentry—who usually had many acres and few shillings—were prevented from doing anything to help their younger children. This was the chief—and a most serious—complaint of the country squire class. That of the folk beneath them related to farming matters. Arable land was being turned into pasture. The new race of landowners had begun to work their properties as mercantile businesses were worked in the towns, careless of the feelings of the old-fashioned farmers and labourers. Where abundant crops had sprung up, the country was given over to sheep-walks. Where a dozen men had found employment, now only one was wanted. Poverty appeared—and henceforth there would be no relief at the doors of the abbeys. Hodge was ready to fall in with the squire, and both to throng to the banner of my lord, with the hated Cromwell as the objective of their fury and indignation. It mattered nothing that Cromwell—as

representing the Crown—was not responsible for all the grievances : he was in the forefront of the new element which was rapidly submerging the old institutions, and he loomed so largely and with such terrible significance that men scarce saw beyond him. In all the complaints that were voiced, Cromwell's name is always heard, repeated with anger and execration.

4. The Lincolnshire Rising.

The insurrection broke out in Lincolnshire early in October 1536. In one of Henry VIII's letters (printed in *Letters and Papers, temp.* Henry VIII) he speaks of the county of Lincoln as being " one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm." Certainly, the Lincolnshire folk were at that time a somewhat lawless race, and since the days of Hereward the Wake had lived amongst their fens after their own fashions. This first rising appears to have been entirely of popular origin, started by the country-folk, who, seeing the Bishop of Lincoln's chancellor, and Henneage, one of the commissioners, at Louth, got the idea into their heads that they were about to pillage the treasury of the parish church. The rising quickly spread : the men of Louth, fetching the great cross out of the church, and using it as their standard, marched out to raise the adjoining towns and villages. Here in Lincolnshire the gentry had little or nothing to do with the rising. They took refuge in the Close at Lincoln ; they were in danger of being murdered by the insurgents. But the movement came to nothing, and was quickly suppressed. There was no open fighting. From Horncastle the rebels dispatched a petition to the King : its provisions are noteworthy. It demanded (1) the restoration of the religious Orders to their houses ; (2) the remitting of the late subsidy ; (3) the repeal of the Statute of Uses (one would think that the country gentry must have had some share in this demand) ; (4) the deprivation of the heretic bishops ; and (5) the removal of " villein blood "

(in other words, of Cromwell) from the Council. But by this time troops under the Duke of Suffolk and Sir John Russell were on the scene, and soon afterwards Suffolk held the King's answer to the petition. Henry refused everything peremptorily. They were presumptuous, these "rude commons of one shire," he wrote; their requests were "contrary to God's law and man's law." Then came the arrest of ringleaders, and the dispersal of their followers: the Lincolnshire rising was over.

5. Robert Aske.

But a more formidable movement had already begun in the East Riding of Yorkshire. While matters were hanging fire in Lincolnshire there came into the county, by way of the ferry across the Humber, at Barton, one Robert Aske, one of the younger sons of the old family of Askes of Aughton, on the Derwent, whose elder brother then held the family estate, and who was himself a barrister, in good practice at Westminster, and owner of some landed property in his native county. He had been staying in Yorkshire, on a hunting-party, and was now on his way back to London by way of the Eastern Counties. In Lincolnshire he was met by certain of the insurgents, who, knowing him for a person of importance, not only forced him to take the oath of fealty to their cause, but placed him at the head of a considerable body of rebels. He seems to have done something towards organizing the movement in Lincolnshire, but with its failure came the end of his very small connexion with it, and he returned to Yorkshire, instead of continuing his journey to London, where, indeed, it would not then have been safe for him to go. By the time of his return, the insurrection had broken out in the East Riding, extending from the Ouse to Hull and Beverley, and everywhere men of all ranks were assembling, much more serious in intent than the easily cowed commons of Lincolnshire. Aske was back in his native

Howdenshire by October 9, and within a few days was at the head of several thousands of men, and marching on York. On October 15 the insurgents were at the gates, 20,000 strong; the men of each wapentake formed into a company, headed by the cross from one of their parish churches. Aske demanded free passage from the lord mayor and aldermen, and at five o'clock next day entered the city at the head of 5000 horsemen. The best order was kept, everything demanded by the insurgents was promptly paid for by them; the proposals of the leaders as to the objects of the rising were published, and already some of the dispossessed monks and nuns came flocking back to their houses.

6. The March to Pontefract.

By this time the rising was general all over the North: of all the Yorkshire castles, only Skipton, Scarborough, and Pontefract were held for the King. Aske's attention turned to Pontefract as the most important place, and thither he repaired at the head of a small force, and was admitted to parley with Lord Darcy, Constable of Pontefract, and an influential company there assembled with him. This conference forms a noteworthy episode in the story of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and it is important that we should know what took place at it. With Darcy were Edward Lee, Archbishop of York; Dr. Magnus, a member of the King's Council; Sir George Darcy; Sir Robert Nevile, and a great many leading knights and gentlemen of the county. They assembled in the state chamber of the castle to hear what Aske had to say, and he addressed them at considerable length on the various grievances for which he and his followers desired redress. He concluded by requiring those present to join the movement, adding, that if they refused, he had the means to make them. Darcy asked the Archbishop to reply, but Lee waived his privilege, preferring to hear Darcy speak first. Darcy then told Aske that he neither could nor would deliver

Pontefract Castle—it was the King's. Lee then spoke, and was more politic: he desired to know what Aske would have them do? Aske replied that the Archbishop and Lord Darcy must influence the King to grant their petition, and in the meantime advise and help the insurgents. Lee thereupon answered that if he was to be a mediator he must remain neutral, and asked for safe conduct from the castle, which Aske refused, with some indignation: he had no faith in Lee. Darcy begged for time to consider matters: finally a truce was arranged: it was to last until the following evening, Friday, October 20. When the time was out, Darcy asked for more time, hoping that relief would arrive. Aske refused, whereupon Darcy offered £20 if the time were extended until nine o'clock next morning. Aske agreed to make no assault on the castle until eight o'clock. But Darcy and those with him had already agreed to yield if no help came, and as none was forthcoming during the night, the castle was handed over early next morning, Saturday, October 20, and those within it took the Pilgrim's oath.

7. The Two Parties.

Pontefract was now the centre-point and rallying-place of the insurgents, who began to assemble there from all over the North of England. Disaffection had gained ground in every northern county. The reasons for it, as has already been pointed out, were various. Its character varied in different centres. In Cumberland and Westmorland the grievances were against the enclosure Acts and unpopular landlords. In Durham and Northumberland the King's treatment of the great Percy family was the chief cause of complaint. In Yorkshire, especially in the western dales, the revolt arose mainly from religious and social causes. But from whatever cause, the discontent was deep. By the time Aske had secured Pontefract Castle and the adherence of those in it, few places in the North were on the

King's side. Scarborough, Skipton, and Chillingham were held for Henry; Newcastle, Berwick, and Carlisle were doubtful. But while they were united in general disaffection, the insurgents were not at one as regards their aims. "There were two distinct sets of agitators," observe the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Exeter Conspiracy*, "whose aims were sometimes almost antagonistic. First, there was the religious movement which usually centred in some monastery—Hexham, Sawley, Furness, or Holme Cultram. . . . Second, there was the social movement directed chiefly against raised rents and enclosures. . . . The leaders of the religious insurrection . . . Aske and Darcy and the friars seem originally to have had little or nothing to do with the social movement, and though they tried to direct it to their own ends they were rather alarmed by it."

8. Lancaster Herald at Pontefract.

But with the surrender of Pontefract the movement was fairly launched. At a council following the surrender Lord Darcy and Sir Robert Constable were proclaimed heads of the Pilgrimage. But the real leader was Robert Aske, whose proclamations were sent out broadcast, with copies of the oath. He and Constable immediately began to drill the insurgent bands which came marching into Pontefract "every hour." And while this was going on, Thomas Miller, Lancaster Herald, came to Pontefract, sent by the Earl of Shrewsbury to read to the Yorkshire rebels the proclamation which had already effectually dispersed the insurgents of Lincolnshire. Miller left an account of this visit. After various preliminaries he was conducted to the great chamber of the castle, where he found Archbishop Lee, Lord Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, and other dignitaries, and, prominent amongst these, Aske himself, "keeping his port and countenance as though he had been a great prince." Lancaster Herald offered to read his message to the Archbishop and Darcy. They directed

him to Aske, who boldly took it from him, "read it openly without reverence," and telling Miller he would give him his answer "of his own wit," informed him that he would not allow him to discharge his mission either at the market cross or amongst the people, who were all of one accord with him, "clearly intending to see a reformation or else to die in those causes." Miller asked what the causes might be: Aske promptly answered him—they were risen for restitution to Christ's Church of all its rights and to clear the wrongs done to it; also for the putting down of vile blood from the King's Council; to effect these things they were going on pilgrimage to London. Then Lancaster Herald was safely sent out of the town, Aske commanding Lord Darcy to give him "two crowns of five shillings to reward, whether I would or no." And on that same day Sir Thomas Percy marched into Pontefract at the head of 10,000 men. These came from the north-east parts of the county, and beyond: next day, William Stapleton brought a great host from Beverley. The mustering was great. Five thousand came from the bishopric of Durham under three peers—Latimer, Nevile, and Lumley: with them came the great banner of St. Cuthbert; these pilgrims, too, were the first to assume the famous badge of the Five Wounds of Christ, which device was shown on the Pilgrimage banner. By the last week of October Aske and his fellow-leaders were in command of a vast armed force, and in readiness to march forward to Doncaster, beyond which, across the Don, the King's forces lay under the Duke of Norfolk.

9. The Cistercian Abbots.

It is now time to find out what share the Cistercians, and particularly certain of their abbots, took in this rising, and what part they played in its rapidly unfolding drama. It goes without saying that by instinct and tradition the Order would be bitterly opposed to the recent royal policy. The monasteries generally were

regarded as outposts of the papacy, and especially those which—however long ago—had had a foreign origin. Here and there were time-servers amongst their superiors —men like Marmaduke Bradley and many other abbots and priors, who were ready to surrender their houses in return for comfortable pensions for themselves. But as a whole the monastic bodies were all for the cause championed by Aske and his fellow-pilgrims, and though it is doubtful if the monks threw themselves into the movement with anything like the zeal shown by the friars, it is certain that they were active supporters, and—from the Crown standpoint—laid themselves open to the charges of treason and sedition afterwards brought against them. Particularly prominent were the Augustinian canons and the Cistercians, though, in the case of the Cistercians, only four of the eight Yorkshire houses seem to have been affected in such a way as to bring them into prominence.

10. Affairs at Salley.

Of these houses, the most notable was the least significant, the poorest, and the furthest removed from men—Salley. This may have been because it was already suppressed when the rising began—though the monks had been replaced in it by the neighbouring populations. As soon as ever the rebellion broke out the community at Salley appealed for help to the leaders in the Craven district, then busied about Skipton Castle, and from October 12 Salley became the centre of the rising on the Lancashire-Yorkshire border. It is commonly believed that one of the monks of Salley composed the remarkable Hymn of the Pilgrims; the brethren certainly incited the people round about them to fight for the Faith. About October 20 a force of rebels lay at Salley in readiness to defend it: this prevented Derby from carrying out the King's orders to hang the Salley monks. A week later we have record that Darcy heard from Salley that Derby was about to attack the house.

Later on we find that the abbot and monks were still in possession, and being fed by their neighbours: Nicholas Tempest has sent them a fat ox, a mutton, and some geese. Still later, at Christmas 1536, the Salley fraternity were actively intriguing with many North Country leaders, and notably with Sir Thomas Percy, younger son of the fifth Earl of Northumberland, for "the extension of the Pilgrimage of Christ's Faith and the commonwealth"; they employed one Shuttleworth as agent, to whom the abbot, on sending him to Percy, gave ten shillings for his expenses; another man, of similar character, William Leache, was also employed in these negotiations by the abbot, but the transactions with him were secret and have never been revealed. Altogether, there can be no doubt that much "treason" emanated from Salley, and from its abbot. In the letter which was sent from Salley to Sir Thomas Percy, the writers say that they "mistrust their most sinister back friend, Sir Arthur Darcy": it was Darcy, as owner of the Salley lands, who eventually hunted down the abbot and arrested him early in 1537. "The poor man protested," say the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, "that he was fit neither to ride nor walk, and had done no wrong, for the commons had forced him to re-enter the abbey against his will. Sir Arthur took depositions from some of the abbot's tenants which, he said, showed that the religious [of Salley] were the stirrers of all this pestilent sedition, 'and not only that, but would eftsoons have quickened and revived the same.'"

11. The Abbot of Jervaulx.

As regards Jervaulx, treason is first heard of there in 1535, when, on the evidence put forward by Sir Francis Bigod—very slight in quality—one of the monks was convicted at York Assizes and duly executed. As to Adam Sedbar, the abbot who was subsequently executed for his share in the Pilgrimage, he certainly appears to have been forced into joining it. On Wednesday,

October 11, 1536, some hundreds of the disaffected of that district assembled at the abbey, and demanded that the abbot should come out to them. The abbot made out by a back door, and hid himself in the hills behind the abbey, where he stayed for four days. But then the rebels came back, and swore that they would burn Jervaulx to the ground if the abbot—who had forbidden his tenants to join them—was not forthcoming. On that he was fetched from "a great crag" by the sore-affrighted monks, and went to the mob at the risk of his life, whose leaders were, at first, for beheading him there and then. Instead, however, they forced him to take the oath, after which they carried him off with them. He was permitted to return home a few days later, but by that time he had evidently changed his views, and had decided that the rebels were going to be successful, for he was heard to remark that the King was offering eighteenpence a day for men, but he trusted that they would get as many men as ever the King should for eightpence a day. At a later stage the Government without doubt regarded Jervaulx as the headquarters of the rising in the Dales district, and its abbot as a principal ringleader. When the abbot was examined in London in the spring of 1537, certain charges were brought against him: (1) That about Christmas 1536 he sent one of his men to Lincolnshire to get news, and that as a result of his report, he, Sedbar, began to plot a new rising; (2) that he gave money to one Staveley and others, to induce them to join the insurrection; (3) that he sent messages to Sir Thomas Percy about the new insurrection; (4) that when the men about Richmond rose, he sent help to them and promised more. To these charges the abbot gave explicit answer: (1) He sent a man to Lincolnshire to collect rents—that was his only business; (2) he gave Staveley a present for finding some sheep which had strayed; (3) he had never sent any message to Sir Thomas Percy; (4) he had no knowledge whatever of

the rising in Richmondshire. The witnesses against Sedbar were men of known bad character, and it is usually held by historians that the Abbot of Jervaulx was innocent of treason, though he was certainly forced into some participation.

12. The Quondam Abbot of Fountains.

As to William Thirsk, the Abbot of Fountains, whom Legh and Layton had turned out as a fool and an idiot, and had accused of all manner of evil, and of theft and sacrilege, and who had also been vilified by his successor, the time-serving Marmaduke Bradley, he seems to have been a quiet and peaceable old gentleman, who, driven out of his own abbey, had taken refuge at Jervaulx. His accusers were the two men whose doubtful evidence convicted Sedbar—Middleton and Staveley, who alleged that in his retirement at Jervaulx, the quondam Abbot of Fountains had privately plotted for the rebels. It is very clear from his letters to Norfolk that Henry regarded Thirsk as a special traitor. When Thirsk was tried, Staveley swore that he had sent a treasonable message by him to Sir Thomas Percy. Thirsk denied this, "and it is probable," say the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, "that the story was a mere invention." Practically the charges against Thirsk were identical with those against Sedbar. These two abbots appear to have been as innocent as their brother of Salley was, undoubtedly, technically guilty. Against Fountains, as a community, there is small evidence of treason, though one of the monks was certainly hanged for that offence at York on August 1, 1537.

13. The Share of Rievaulx.

There has been much controversy amongst antiquaries and local historians as to whether an abbot of Rievaulx took part in the insurrection. Some writers have gone so far as to say that the abbot at the time of the Pilgrimage was hanged with those of Fountains and Jervaulx.

This abbot—if it were so—would be Edward Kirkby, who had been deprived and pensioned, and succeeded by Roland Blyton, the last abbot. "Kirkby," says Mr. Clay in his *Suppression Papers*, "must have been found to have been implicated in the rebellions. He was put in the Tower, and there was a charge for his maintenance there for six weeks at 6*s.* 8*d.* a week." Then Mr. Clay makes a definite statement: "He was sentenced with the other abbots, but probably got reprieved, as there is a mention of him in October 1537 as moving about his pension." The authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace* say that Sir Thomas Percy sent George Lumley round to several religious houses in the North of Yorkshire, asking abbots and priors and two monks of each house to come forward in their "best array" and with their "best cross," and that the Abbot of Rievaulx and the Prior of Guisborough were ready to come in person, but that Aske countermanded these orders and bade the religious stay at home, and they do not mention any Abbot of Rievaulx as having been put to trial. Upon this matter the late Canon Atkinson has some remarks in the Introduction to his edition of the Rievaulx Chartulary. "That there was an Abbot of Rievaulx condemned and executed for complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace is probably certain," he says; "but that it was not the abbot regnant at the time is more than equally certain." If this is correct, the abbot must have been the deprived Kirkby, but Mr. Clay has shown us that he was alive and busied about his pension late in 1537. Haldesworth, Vicar of Halifax, was in London at the time of the executions, and in a letter to Sir Henry Savile writes that the Abbots of Fountains, Jervaulx, and Rievaulx suffered at Tyburn—but the words relating to Rievaulx were crossed out by the writer, as if he had found himself mistaken. There is certainly little in all the records to show that Rievaulx as a community had much to do with the rising, and we hear next to nothing of the

complicity of Meaux, or of Roche, or of Byland, or of Kirkstall, though Ripley, Abbot of Kirkstall, was certainly suspected by some of the loyalists as being one of those who secretly pulled the strings.

14. The Advance on Doncaster.

The great body of the insurgents being assembled at Pontefract, Aske and the other leaders set forth for Doncaster, and at daybreak on Thursday, October 26, 1536, were in full array on the north bank of the Don. The exact number present is not known: Aske himself reckoned it at thirty thousand, but it was probably much nearer forty thousand. The Pilgrim banner was there with its device of the Five Wounds; the crimson and silver standard of St. Cuthbert of Durham was there too; every man wore the Pilgrim badge, similar to the banner. "Priests and friars moved along the lines, commending and encouraging the soldiers; no man, they said, should fear to die in defence of the Faith, with the sign of Christ's Passion over his heart." And doubtless, as they waited there on Scawby Leas, near the Great North Road, these insurgents sang the curious hymn which had been purposely written for them.

15. The Pilgrims' Hymn.

Christ Crucified
For thy wounds wide
Us commons guide
  Which pilgrims be
Through God's grace
For to purchase
Old wealth and peace
  Of the spirituality.

Great God's fame
Doth church proclaim
Now to be lame
  And fast in bonds

Robbed, spoiled, and shorn
From cattle and corn
And clean forth borne
Of houses and lands.

Alack, alack
For the church sake
Poor commons wake
And no marvel
For clear it is
The decay of this
How the poor shall miss
No tongue can tell.

For there they had
Both ale and bread
At time of need
And succour great
In all distress
And heaviness
In our poorness
And well intreat.

In trouble and care
When that we were
In manner all bare
Of our substance
We found good bate
At churchmen gate
Without checkmate
Or variance.

God that rights all
Redress now shall
And what is thrall
Again make free
By this voyage
And Pilgrimage
Of young and sage
In this country.

In certain versions of this hymn there is another verse wherein the singers made allusion to the particular objects of their aversion :

Crim, crame, and riche,
With thre lll and the liche
As sum men teache
God theym amend
And that Aske may
Without delay
Here make a stay
And well to end.

The allusions are, of course, obvious. *Crim* was Cromwell ; *crame*, Cranmer ; *riche*, Richard Riche, then Solicitor-General, whom Sir Thomas More had charged with perjury in open court. The three *l*'s were Legh, Layton, and the Bishop of Lincoln ; the *liche* was the Bishop of Lichfield.

16. The Conference at Doncaster.

After the holding of a council by the leaders it was determined that an embassy should be sent to Norfolk, and Sir Thomas Hilton, Sir Ralph Ellerker, Robert Bowes, and Robert Challoner were appointed. They were to present to the duke the five essential points which they considered justificatory of the rising. These were (1) The maintenance of the Faith ; (2) restoration of the ancient liberties of the Church ; (3) repeal of the recent unpopular laws ; (4) expulsion of villain blood from the Council ; and (5) the deprivation and banishment of Cromwell, Riche, and the heretic bishops. On Friday, October 27, the embassy returned and reported that Norfolk and the leading nobles were willing to meet a deputation of the Pilgrims' leaders on the bridge at Doncaster, there to discuss the complaints more fully. The original four were reappointed ; with them went three peers, Darcy, Latimer, and Lumley ; Sir John Bulmer and Sir Robert Constable. Aske remained with

his army, and took the opportunity of reviewing it—perhaps to let the King's troops see what a mighty force was with him. The conference on the bridge was a long one, and some of the insurgents began to chafe, fearing lest the "gentlemen" should betray them. No account of what actually took place exists, but in the end the embassy returned. A truce had been agreed upon. Norfolk was to go to the King at once, accompanied by Sir Ralph Ellerker and Robert Bowes, and to lay the Pilgrims' petition before him. The assembled armies were to disperse within forty-eight hours, and a truce was to be maintained until the King's answer to the petition was given. Late that night Lord Darcy and Robert Aske rode to Pontefract and persuaded their rearguard to go home. The men who composed it obeyed, but reluctantly, doubting if any good would come of the truce. Next day Norfolk set out with Bowes and Ellerker to see the King, and on Sunday, October 29, both armies had quietly dispersed—one to the North, the other to the South.

17. The King's Answers.

Henry VIII now appears on the scene. Norfolk and his companions arrived at Windsor on Thursday, November 2. "After dinner the King sent for the northern gentlemen. On first seeing them, Henry could not repress an outburst of rage, but he allowed himself to be soothed by Norfolk and other members of the Council, and in the end promised to write an answer to the articles with his own hand." The document which he drew up was seen by no one until he had finished it. Taking it altogether it was—considering its authorship—a mild document, extending a wide pardon, but it made no concessions, and Norfolk, when he became aware of its contents, knew that the Pilgrims would regard it as a declaration of war. Bowes and Ellerker set off with the King's reply on Sunday, November 5, but they had not got far before they were stopped

—Cromwell and the Council had been at work; the King had heard more news, and listened to fresh advice, and from that moment Henry began a very dishonourable course of treachery. The two ambassadors being recalled, he decided to keep them for a time, and they were delayed until the middle of November, during which time certain events happened in Yorkshire which seemed colourably like a breaking of the truce on the part of the rebels. On November 17 Bowes and Ellerker were at length back in the county, at Templehurst, Lord Darcy's house, where they delivered the King's *verbal* reply: the written reply had been withdrawn. Henry's message was this—he found the complaints "dark and obscure"; let the disaffected appoint three hundred representatives to meet the Duke of Norfolk at Doncaster, there to discuss matters. After much debate, the leaders at Templehurst decided to call a great council, and the place of meeting was fixed at York.

18. The Conference at York.

In York, on November 21, in a building which cannot now be identified, the leaders met. There were all the prominent men present save Darcy, who was excused attendance because of his difficulties in travelling. There were also some spies present—one of them, sad to relate, was Robert Aske's own brother, Christopher, who "demeaned himself so covertly" that he became possessed of all the Pilgrims' secrets. Bowes gave an account of what had taken place at Windsor, and said that he and Ellerker had come back convinced of Henry's good faith. This done, Sir Robert Constable took occasion to warn his fellows against the treachery of Cromwell. But Aske, "adhering steadily to his policy of trying every means to obtain peaceful redress," pointed out that they were not going to treat with Cromwell, but with Norfolk, who was "faithful and honourable." Eventually it was decided to hold another general council at Pontefract two days before the meeting

with Norfolk at Doncaster. At this the complaints were to be set forth in a formal set of articles, and at the same time the Archbishop of York and others equally learned were to be required to draw up spiritual articles. Provision was then made for the appointing at Pontefract of the three hundred men who were to meet the King's representative.

19. The Council at Pontefract.

The council at Pontefract sat from December 2 to December 4. It is not certain where its proceedings took place, but the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace* think they were held at the Cluniac priory of St. John. There was a very full attendance of peers, knights, gentlemen, and commons, and this council is of great importance in the history of the rebellion because it was at it that the insurgents' complaints were definitely put in the form of specified articles. The list is lengthy: it is only possible to make extracts from it in the present instance. It will be observed that the grievances are of four sorts—religious, legal, social, and constitutional. The petition, as formally approved at Pontefract, was:

1. That the heresies of Luther, Wyclif, Huss, and of many other persons named, and those contained in certain specified books, should be annulled and destroyed within the realm.
2. That the supremacy of the Church "touching *cura animarum*," should be reserved to the See of Rome, and bishops consecrated thence, but that no firstfruits or pensions should be paid to Rome out of the realm, or else a "reasonable" pension.
3. That the Lady Mary should be declared legitimate "in danger that the title might recur to the Crown of Scotland."
4. That the suppressed religious houses should be restored and have their lands and goods again.
5. That the tenths and firstfruits should be clearly discharged.
6. That the friars should be restored to their houses.
7. That the heretics, spiritual and temporal, should be punished.

8. That the Lord Cromwell, the Lord Chancellor [Audley], and Sir Richard Riche should have condign punishment "as subverters of the good laws of this realm."
9. That the lands in the northern counties should be held by tenant-right.
10. That the statute of hand-guns and crossbows should be repealed and the penalties thereof except in the royal preserves.
11. That Doctor Legh and Doctor Layton should have condign punishment for their extortions and abominations.
12. That the old methods should be restored in the elections of knights and burgesses.
13. That the statutes for enclosures and intakes should be put in execution, and that all enclosures made since the fourth year of Henry VII be pulled down.
14. That the people should be discharged of the quinzième (fifteenth) and other taxes.
15. That a Parliament should shortly be summoned at York or at Nottingham.
16. That the statute of the declaration of the Crown by will should be repealed.
17. That all penalties, etc., incurred during the time of unrest should be pardoned.
18. That the rights and privileges of the Church should be confirmed: no priest to suffer by the sword unless first degraded; benefit of clergy to remain; sanctuary to save in extreme need.
19. That the liberties of the Church should have their old customs —at Durham, Beverley, Ripon, York.
20. That the Statute of Uses should be repealed.
21. That the statutes of treasons made since 21 Henry VIII should be repealed.
22. That the common laws should have place "as was used in the beginning of your Grace's reign."
23. That no man, subpœnaed North of Trent, should appear but at York, or elsewhere by attorney, except upon pain of allegiance or King's business.
24. That a remedy should be provided against escheators for finding of false offices and extortionate fees-taking.

20. The Conference of Clergy.

While the laymen were drawing up these articles, Lee, Archbishop of York, was presiding over a meeting of clerics which had been summoned by his Chancellor, Dr. Cliff. Those present, in addition to the Archbishop, were John Ripley, Abbot of Kirkstall; Dr. Sherwood, Chancellor of Beverley; Dr. Langredge, Archdeacon of Cleveland; Dr. Downes, Chancellor of York; Dr. Marshall, Archdeacon of Nottingham; James Thwaites, Prior of Pontefract; two well-known friars, Dr. Pickering and Dr. Rokeby; and some beneficed clergymen of high standing. They proceeded to discuss certain theological questions bearing on the movement, the principal one being that relating to the Royal Supremacy. On this they eventually agreed that the King might retain the title of *Caput Ecclesiæ*, but might not exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction. They considered and approved certain propositions which had been submitted to them by Aske, the most important being a declaration of opinion that "by the laws of the Church, of General Councils, of approved doctors, and by consent of Christian peoples, the Pope of Rome hath been taken for Head of the Church and Vicar of Christ, and so ought to be taken." After approving the laymen's articles, those and their own were delivered to Aske, who, before the divines dispersed—but presumably not in Lee's presence—put to them a pertinent question: Was it at any time lawful for subjects to resist their sovereign? "To this they returned no answer"—nor can we wonder, remembering their situation in the midst of an insurgent army.

21. Second Meeting at Doncaster.

On Wednesday, December 6, Aske, at the head of ten knights, ten esquires, and twenty of the commons, met Norfolk and his council at the house of the White Friars at Doncaster. They began the proceedings by

falling on their knees and humbly asking for the King's free pardon and favour—after which they presented their articles. These were argued between Aske and Norfolk all day. In the evening Norfolk agreed to a free pardon, a free Parliament, and the provisional restoration of the religious houses. He at once wrote to Henry stating that he saw no prospect of peace unless these terms were confirmed; meanwhile Aske and his company rode back to Pontefract, and next morning proclaimed the terms to three thousand Pilgrims at the old market cross. During that day, however, there was a hitch in the proceedings, which necessitated a hurried journey to Doncaster, but next day all had been put right, and on Friday, December 8, a herald brought the formal pardon to Pontefract and it was read to the insurgents on St. Thomas's Hill, close by the Cluniac priory. The commons thereupon went home, and Aske and his immediate following rode to Doncaster to conclude certain matters with Norfolk. These done, Aske dramatically tore off his badge of the Five Wounds, his companions followed suit, exclaiming that henceforth they would wear no sign but that of the King, Norfolk gave the formal order for the restoration of the monasteries, and the council was over. And so was the success which Aske and his comrades seemed to have gained. For all this was part of Henry's diplomacy, or, to give it a plainer word, treachery—he had no intention of keeping faith with the rebels, and in all these proceedings was merely tricking them. "Henry," wrote the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, "had no intention of keeping the unauthorized promise which Norfolk as his representative had made, but he did not repudiate it. He permitted and encouraged those whom it most concerned to believe that he regarded the promise as binding, until he found a favourable opportunity for denying it altogether, and punishing those who had trusted him."

22. Henry VIII and Robert Aske.

One man there was who, because of his own singular nobility and simplicity of character, trusted the King implicitly—Robert Aske. Now we come to Henry's own personal relations with Aske. They are of a piece with all that history has taught us of the falsity and cruelty of the Tudors, from Henry VII to Elizabeth. In the middle of December Henry sent a safe-conduct to Aske, accompanied by a gracious message. As, he said, he had granted a free pardon to Aske, he had now conceived a great wish to have speech with him; wherefore he desired him to come to Court, where, he hoped, Aske, by frank dealing with him, would gain his favour. Aske repaired to London in the last week of the year. That he was received in a fulsomely flattering manner by Henry is certain. In the *Spanish Chronicle*, edited by the late Martin Hume (chapter xvii), there is an account of his reception, which, if not strictly accurate as to detail, is reliable in its main features. Henry, as soon as he saw Aske, rose up, threw his arms about him, welcomed him warmly, and in the presence of the Council told him that he had only to ask what he desired and it should be granted. Aske spoke out with a Yorkshireman's candour and boldness. "Sir, your Majesty allows yourself to be governed by a tyrant named Cromwell. Every one knows that if it had not been for him the 7000 poor priests I have in my company would not be ruined wanderers. They must have enough to live upon, for they have no handicraft." Henry, according to this account, made Aske very rich presents—a gold chain and a thousand pounds—but according to *Letters and Papers* no more than a crimson satin jacket; promised that the priests should be provided for, and told Aske that he was wiser than any one thought, and he would make him, there and then, one of his Council. Certainly he persuaded Aske to write that narrative of events which remains the truest and best history of the

insurrection. Certainly, too, the simple-minded Yorkshireman was captivated by Henry's well-assumed graciousness; certainly, he believed in Henry's promises. But there was one man then at Court who could not win Aske over—with Thomas Cromwell the ex-leader would have nothing to do. Still, Cromwell's master had won Aske's confidence, after the well-established Tudor fashion, and he went home little knowing that already the false tyrant he had left behind was quietly planning his destruction.

23. The Bigod Rising.

The means soon lay ready to Henry's hand. Aske and the other more prominent leaders of the bloodless Pilgrimage of Grace, trusting in the royal promises, had forgotten one highly important fact—they themselves were only a few amongst thousands upon thousands of discontented men. After the formal pardoning at Pontefract, the gentlemen and the commons had gone home to their estates and their farms, hoping, as men will, to see things mended quickly. But there was no sign of amendment, and men will not live on promises. There were restless spirits in the county; and while Robert Aske was doubtless planning how things might be done with the royal sanction, other things were being done which gave Henry excellent cause and excuse for withdrawing the royal favour and promises. The Cistercians of Salley were again rebellious; there was rioting at Beverley; the royal deer were poached in Craven; there was a disturbance in Cumberland over the tithes; finally the renewed risings under John Hallam and Sir Francis Bigod enabled the King to sweep away all the Norfolk negotiations, and to come down with all his force on every one who had resisted his rule during the past year. The Bigod rising was, in reality, in opposition to the former leaders, Darcy, Aske, and Constable, but the Government made no nice distinctions, and after Norfolk had crushed it and had hanged

some eighty participants, all the principal folk who had been connected with the Pilgrimage of Grace were arrested. The spring of 1537 saw most of them haled off to the Tower, or to the local gaols—before summer began they were all on trial; before it ended they were dead men. Just as Elizabeth wreaked her vengeance in 1570 on the men who had taken part in the Rising of the North, so Henry made example of men and women who had dared to follow the banner of the Five Wounds in 1536.

24. Tudor Justice.

It is needless to go into the details of trials whereat, in every case, the proceedings were mere travesties of justice. Aske and his fellow-leaders were not guilty in the matter of the Bigod rising, and had already been pardoned for their share in the Pilgrimage of Grace. But here was the opportunity, not only of getting rid of them, but of exercising that love of revenge which was so marked a quality of the Tudor sovereigns. "All intelligent and honourable men," observe the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, "knew that the King was not doing justice. There is abundant proof . . . that no class of society believed it to be just or right or necessary for the common safety to put men to death 'for a word speaking,' particularly when the evidence that the word had been spoken was only hearsay or was supplied by those who had an interest in the death of the accused. The treason laws, and trials such as those of More, Fisher, and the Carthusian monks in the previous year, excited so much horror as to cause the rebellion. The rising was at first successful; it was overcome, not by force, nor by the rally of any considerable party round the throne, but by treachery. The King in the moment of victory was able to do as he pleased, for the defeated opposition was bewildered, terrified, and helpless."

25. The King's Vengeance.

Short shrift was given. Darcy was brought to trial in Westminster Hall on Tuesday, May 15, 1537: Cromwell, who had drawn up the indictment, being one of the judges. He was, of course, found guilty, and it was intended to execute him on the following Saturday, but the King postponed the execution, being uncertain whether the best effect would be produced by having his victim put to death in London or in Yorkshire. Meanwhile he was sent to the Tower, and thence, on June 30, he was led out to Tower Hill and beheaded. He forgave the King a debt of £4400 which Henry owed him: Henry repaid his courtesy by having his head exposed on London Bridge. Lord Hussey, a Lincolnshire magnate, who was tried with Darcy, was sent down to Lincoln to suffer: his execution was followed by a riot in the city. On the day after the trial of the two peers, Westminster Hall was the scene of the trial of Sir Francis Bigod, Sir John Bulmer, Lady Bulmer, Sir Robert Constable, and Robert Aske, with some prisoners of less importance. They were all found guilty. On Thursday, May 17, James Cockerell, quondam Prior of Guisborough; William Wood, Prior of Bridlington; Adam Sedbar, Abbot of Jervaulx; William Thirsk, quondam Abbot of Fountains; and some others, clergymen and laymen, were tried and sentenced. The executions began within a few days. On Friday, May 25, Sir John Bulmer, Sir Stephen Hamerton, Nicholas Tempest, the Prior of Guisborough, and the Abbot of Fountains were put to death at Tyburn. Bulmer and Hamerton "enjoyed" the privilege of knighthood, and were only hanged and beheaded; the others were hanged, drawn, and quartered. On the same day Lady Bulmer was drawn on a hurdle to Smithfield, and there burnt alive. "She was," says Wriothesley in his chronicle, "a very fair creature, and a beautiful." On Saturday, June 2, Sir Thomas Percy, Sir Francis Bigod,

the Prior of Bridlington, and the Abbot of Jervaulx suffered at Tyburn. As for the Abbot of Salley, he was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Carlisle. Some seventy men who had taken part in the Lincolnshire rising were done to death at various places in the county. And now there were Aske and Constable to be finished. They were sent down to Yorkshire in charge, and on Friday, July 6, being market-day, Constable was hanged outside the Beverley Gate at Hull, and his body afterwards "so trimmed in chains," wrote Norfolk, "that I think his bones will hang there this hundred year." It was market-day, too, in York, Thursday, July 12, when Robert Aske was hanged, in Norfolk's presence, on a scaffold that had been prepared on the top of Clifford's Tower. These were the more notable executions: in all, 216 persons were sacrificed to Henry's desire for revenge. And folk were very conversant with Holy Writ in those days, and it may be that some of these people had in their minds as they went to their deaths that passage which admonishes men to put not their trust in princes.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAST DAYS

1. Norfolk in Yorkshire.

The further suppression of the religious houses at first went hand in hand with the hunting down and punishment of the Northern rebels. Norfolk had been sent to Yorkshire in February 1537 to suppress the new risings, and henceforth he plays a terrible part in the swiftly moving drama which was ending in tragedy and blood and destruction. At this period he is a not less dreadful and sinister figure than Cromwell: in the opinion of some writers he is more to be feared, more worthy of condemnation. "If it were necessary," observe the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, "to make a choice between [Cromwell's] moral character and that of his high-born opponent, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, it could scarcely be denied that Norfolk was the greater scoundrel of the two. He was simply a courtier and politician, with not a tenth of Cromwell's ability. By inclination he was conservative and favoured the Old Learning, but if he could advance himself by denying his politics or his faith he was quite ready to abandon either. Cromwell at least had a political end in view; Norfolk merely wished to aggrandize himself and had no other object." Between Cromwell and Norfolk there was no love lost; each was scheming for the other's fall, yet, write the same authors, "among all the records of misery, crime, and brutality in the letters and papers of the time there is perhaps nothing more horrible than Norfolk's letters to Cromwell; the sickly expressions of

goodwill, the filthy jokes, the grimaces of thankfulness, make them vile reading."

2. Executions of Religious.

Some of these letters are printed in Mr. Clay's *Suppression Papers* and show that Norfolk let little time slip when he went to Yorkshire early in 1537. On February 13 he writes to "the right honourable and my singular good lord, my lord Privy Seal," saying that he encloses a bill of the names of such as are now cast for execution, with particulars of where it shall be done. *Item*, there are two canons of Warter Priory to be hanged in chains at York, of whom one was sometime Superior of that house; with them will suffer two yeomen, one named Fenton, the other Caunte. *Item*, the Superior of Watton is to be hanged in chains there—presumably at his own door, a favourite proceeding. Also he has safely in prison a friar about whose seditious preaching the learned men of these parts have not yet made up their minds; but he sends Cromwell the said friar's confession. His zeal is spurred by letters from the King. Henry writes to him on February 22 telling him to send up "in perfitt suertie" the traitors Bigod, and the friar of Guisborough, and Leache if they can catch him, and Dr. Pickering, the Canon of Bridlington, and to "tie up" the monks of Salley without mercy. He writes again on March 17—Norfolk is to proceed against the abbots of Fountains (the quondam), Jervaulx, and Salley, and to execute certain others at his discretion; he is to be strict about the friars, who, says the King, are "disciples of the bp. of Rome and sowers of sedition." Soon after this Norfolk was made Lord President of the newly constituted Council of the North, and from April 1537 to October 1538 he had matters very much his own way in the northern counties, and exercised a tyranny only second to his master's.

3. The Yorkshire Land-grabbers.

It soon became known that there was to be further destruction amongst the religious houses, and in the spring of 1537 the greed and rapacity of the Yorkshire gentry anxious to profit by the dissolution of monasteries and convents breaks out again in letters to Cromwell. Sir William Musgrave, of the ancient Westmorland family, is anxious to get his share.

March 17, 1537

Right honourable and my espeschall good Lord. This shalbe to advertis youre lordschipe that wher[as] ther is a vere small priore of nonys callyd Esholt within a lordshipe of my lait graunfather Sir Christopher Ward who lyeth ther, callyd the manner of Esholt, which standeth very commodyusle for me, the holle valew thereof by yere xix *li.* or there about . . . pleas yow to be so much my good lord as to helpe me to the sayme of the King's Highnes for me and my heres. . . . I pray God to preserve youre good lordshipe in myche honor and cumfurts such as youre nobill harte requyrith.

William Musgrave

Cromwell's "nobill harte" was constantly rejoiced by these requests: they must have reached him daily. Every man who had the least claim or excuse wanted something: as in the case of the next letter, the suitor often gave an alternative; if he might not have this, pray let him have that:

1537

I humblie beseche your good lordshipe to have me in remembrance to the Kynge hys highnes of the monastery of Bartall [Baredale] in the countie of Yorke . . . and if be not your lordshipes pleasure that I shall have this I beseeche your lordshipe to remember me of the offyces of the keping of Ffossa, being in the sayd countie. Thomas Dalaryvere

4. A Plea for Hampole.

Now and then, however, one comes across a country gentleman who writes to Cromwell asking, not for any-

thing for himself, but that some particular religious house may be allowed to stand. Here is one such instance in a letter from Sir Brian Hastings, knight, of Fenwick:

April 13, 1537

Plesythe youre honorable lordshippe at this my pore instance to be so good lorde unto one pore house of Nunes called Hampole, which are near neighburs unto me and of good name, fame, and rule, and so reputed and taken amongst all the Cuntrey aboute me, to the whiche house the kynge is so good and gracious lorde unto the sayd house by the order and direccion of youre lordshippe and others of the kynges most honorable councell shall not be suppressed bot to remayne and stand and have more religious women assigned unto them . . . I shall estsones desyre youre honorable lordshipe to be so good lord unto the said pore house that they may have theyre sayd confirmaccion . . . and they wilbe your daily bedwomen. . . .

But here he puts in a word for himself:

Furthur it will please your good lordshipe to call to your remembrance that at my last being with youe at London the Kynge was a good and gracious lorde unto me to graunte me the parsonage of Campsall for terme of one hundreth yeares and I have the Kynges bylle assigned for the same . . . now master Chaunceler of the Augmentacyons wyll not suffer it to pass the seale for what cause I knowe not . . . my especiall truste is in your lordeshippe be good to me herein . . . and thus oure Lorde God preserve you longe with honoure.

Brian Hastings

5. Further Legislation.

The renewed disaffection in the North during the early months of 1537, and the rebellious spirit manifested at Salley, Hexham, Whalley, and Newminster, afforded Henry and his Ministers an excellent pretext for further repression, and during the year several of the larger religious houses were dissolved by the attainder of their abbots. The statute which settled the royal succession (25 Henry VIII, cap. 22) was so twisted as to make forfeit-

able for treason the properties of a community presided over by a superior found guilty of treason—"a great stretch of law," observes such a decidedly partisan writer as Burnet, "since the offence of an ecclesiastical incumbent is a personal thing and cannot prejudice the church." Under this system of suppression by attainder Jervaulx came to its end, and the correspondence of the period between Henry, Cromwell, and Norfolk is full of allusions to its dissolution. Here again the layman is found urging his claims to the monastic spoils. Sir William Parr, son of Sir Thomas Parr, K.G., of Kendal, was head of the family which held the patronage of Jervaulx; he was one of the King's agents in suppressing the Lincolnshire rising; he was subsequently created Marquis of Northampton, and his sister Katharine was Henry's last wife. He writes to Cromwell in pursuance of his own interests, evidently as soon as he has heard of the suppression of Jervaulx by attainder.

May 28, 1537

Right honorable and my verey singler good lorde my dutye remembred unto youre lordeshipe in my hartiest maner I commend me unto [you]. And where as my late being withe your lordeshipe at London I shewed you that I had moved the Kings Highnes to be good and gracious lorde unto me for the preferment of Gervaxe Abbeye in Yorkeshire whereof I am ffownnder in case it weyre suppressed . . . theis shalbe to beseke youre good lordeshipe to have my said sute in remembrance ffor I am informed there is instant labor made by others in their behalf. . . . I troste youre lordshipe shalbe assured of me at all tymes to be at youre Commaundement to the uttermost of my powier. As kneweth the Lorde, who preserve you're lordshipe in moche honor. WILLIAM PARR

6. JERVAULX.

The references to Jervaulx in the correspondence are usually of a very material nature. Norfolk remarks to the King, May 10, that "Jerues is right well furnisshed with lede in the coveryng of their houses"; Henry writes to Norfolk, three days later, as to the great care

to be shown in taking inventories of the goods at Jervaulx and Bridlington, especially that "mete for our use," by which, of course, he meant plate and jewels. Cromwell, writing to Norfolk, May 22, about Jervaulx, gives him minute instructions about the property, especially the corn and cattle—"his highnes doubteth not but ye wyll order the same as shalbe most for his hignes profitt." Little time was lost in the work at Jervaulx. On May 23 William Blytheman informs Cromwell that "too morow his grace (Norfolk) goothe towardes Jerves"; eight days later Norfolk writes to the Vicar-General, "My veray good Lorde with most herty recommendacons . . . the house of Jerueaulx is suppressed." On June 2 he writes again to Cromwell, saying that Jervaulx was "moche in debte," but the sale of the movable goods will fully discharge it, "with a better penny."

7. Layton Once More.

About this time, June 1537, Layton comes on the scene again. He has heard that the whole of the religious houses will be dissolved: he naturally wishes further employment in that profitable business. So he writes to Cromwell.

June 4, 1537

Pleasit yowe to understande, that whereas ye intende shortly to visite, and be lyke shall have many sutters unto yowe for the same to be yor commissares, if hit myght stonde with your pleasure that doctor Lee and I myght have committyde unto us the North Contre, and to begyn in Lincolne dioces, northwardes here from London, Chester dioces, Yorke, and so furthe to the borders of Scotlande, to ryde downe one syde and to cum up the other, ye shalbe well and faste assuryde that ye shall nother fynde monke, chanone, frear, prior, abbott, or any other of what degre so euer he be, that shall do the Kynges hyghnes so good servys in this matter for thos partties, nether be so trusty, trewe, and faithfull to joine in the same doyng all thynges so diligently for your purpos and your discharge. And forasmuche as the Kynges hyghnes hath put his onely truste in yowe for the

reformacion of his clergie, gyvnyng yowe thereunto onely auctoritie and power, ye must have suche as ye may trust evyn as well as your owne self, wiche must be unto yowe as *alter ego*. Doctor Lee and I have onely bene prefeeryde to the Kynges servys by yowe, *et te solum ab eo tempore in huncusque diem habuimus Mæcenatem et unicum patronum, nec alium unquam habituri*. Oure desier is, there for, now to declare unto yowe owre trew harttey and faithfull mynde oure faste and unfaynede servys that we bere towardes yowe, and owe unto yowe, as ye haue of ryght bownde us. Ther ys nother monasterie, selle, priorie, nor any other religiouse howse in the north; but other doctor Lee or I have familier acqwayntance within x or xij mylles of hit, so that no knaverie can be hyde from us in that contre, nor ther we cannot be over fayssede nor suffer any maner injurie. We knowe and haue experiens bothe of the fassion off the contre and the rudenes of the pepull, owre frendes and kynsfookes be despersyde in those parties, in every place redy to assyste us if any stobborne or sturdy carle might perchaunce be found a rebellous. If ye hade leisure to overlooke the booke of articles that I made for your visitacion this tyme xij monethes, and to marke evere sondire interrogatorie therein wryttyn, dowtles this is matter sufficient to detecte and opyn all coloryde sanctitie, all superstitiouse rewlles of pretensyde religion and other abusys detestable of all sorttes hetherto clokyde and coloryde by the reformitors so named of evere religion wiche ever by frendeshipe, tyll this day hath founde craffty meanys to be ther own visiters, therby no reformacion intendyng nother goode religion (if any be) to incresse, but onely to kepe secrete all matters of mischeffe, with muche priuey murmuryng among them selffes, sellyng ther jewelles and plate to take half the valew for redy money, with gret rewyne and dekay of ther howsis which muste nedes yet continewe and indure dayly more and more with incresse, unleste ye nowe sett to yowr helpyng hande, and with expedicion spedy and efftsones tendre the premisses. Most humble desieryng yowe to take no displeasure with this my rude and playne letter, thus boldely utteryng unto yowe my intire mynde and consayte, referryng all to your wisdom and goodnes, by the hasty hande of your moste assuryde poir preste,

RYCHARDE LAYTON

8. Cranmer and his Servant.

In the early months of 1538 Cromwell began to be still further approached by suitors anxious to secure the monastic lands in Yorkshire. One of his most pressing applicants was Cranmer, who was now Archbishop of Canterbury: in February of that year Cranmer writes to his "veray singuler good Lorde" at some length on behalf of a favourite of his, one John Wakefield, "gentilman, Controller of my houshold, a man of goode judgmente and affection towards God's worde." Cranmer has known Wakefield for the space of twelve years; Wakefield, he says, was one of those who had publicly testified "againste the abusions of the clergie," and had resisted the efforts of Lord Darcy to draw him into the Pilgrimage of Grace. He has had little for his loyalty. "And now," continues the Archbishop, "for asmoche as I am enformed that the Priorie of Pomfrete and the demayne lands of that howse lyeth very comodiously for hyme specyally in the towne wheare he dwelleth, theis shalbe to beseche your lordshipe to be so good lorde unto hym as to be a meane unto the kinges majestie that he may haue the preferment of the saide priorie with the demaynes in ferme." Elizabeth Ughtred, praying "Almighty Jhesu ever preserve your good lordshipe," begs Cromwell to get her "oone of these abbays, yf thay fortune to goe downe." She will, she says, be "more bounde unto" Cromwell than "anny livinge woman mought be and moor," if he will only help her to "a thousande marke a yer." The Earl of Westmorland, also praying "Jeshu preserve youre lordshipe," again begs fulsomely for grants of Rosedale (which he got) and Keldholme, "to my grete comfortte." Sir John Nevile begs hard that he may have something—"the howse off Selbey, or Sanntt Oswaldes [Nostell Priory], or Monkburton with the demaynes" thereof; he begs the "holle trinitie" to have Cromwell "in his blyssyd kepyng long to endure": he presses his suit to Dr.

Legh also, assuring him how he will serve him if only Legh will induce Cromwell to let him have some of the spoils. And so it is with many others—pious wishes, sickening to read because of their evident hypocrisy, are mingled with hints of bribes and service, if only those who have the monastic properties at disposal will throw some share to the hungry suitors.

9. Speculators in Land.

The Cistercian properties in Yorkshire were naturally regarded as the chief prizes in the wholesale loot. There were certain men of the time who saw vast commercial opportunities in the Suppression, and who were eager to buy up the lands at the Crown's prices and afterwards to sell them at considerable profit. One of these speculators was Sir Arthur Darcy; another was William Ramsden, of Longley, near Huddersfield; a third was Sir Richard Gresham, a famous merchant, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1537, and is known to have been a great lender of money in his time, having financial transactions of the usury sort with the King, and with Wolsey, and with Cromwell, by all of which he greatly profited. Gresham appears to have had his eye on Fountains from the first hints of its suppression, and on October 22, 1538, he writes to Cromwell about the sale. It will be noticed that the letter contains some particulars of its writer's financial dealings with the Crown.

Myn homble dewty to yor goode lordeshippe, maye yt please you to be aduertyssed that whereas I have movyd the Kynges magiste to purches of his grace certen laundes be longyn to the howsse of Fowntens to the vallewe of thre hundred and fyvty poundes by yere after the rate of xx *li* yeres purches the som of the mony amowntyng unto 7000 *li* whereof to be dessallyd 1000 *li* whiche I delyuered by the comawndement of the lorde Cardenale to the Ducke of Bokyngham on his goynge to Guynes and the seyd Cardenale receyvyd of the sayde Ducke ij obligacons where I stonde boundyn he and S^r^ Thomas Woodehowsse with others

to the Kynges usse for payment of the sayd 1000 *li* and the same obligacons wher delyuered by the seyd Cardinale to Master Mekelowe beynge thresaurer of the Kynges chamber, onely to thintent that I shoulld be recompenced to the some of 1000 *li* in customes whiche yet I am not, as yor lordsheppes do knowe, and for the reste of the mony for the sayde laundes whiche ys 6000 *li* I wylle paye in hande 3000 *li* and the other 3000 *li* . . . to paye yerlly 500 *li* tyll yt be payed, beschynge yor goode lordeshipe to be soo goode lorde unto me that I may knowe the Kynges gracious pleassor that yf I shold have the sayde laundes that I maye prepare the mony to be in a rydenes. And thus ower lorde preserue yor goode lordeshyppe with helthe.

Yor owne at yor lordeshepis commawndement,

RYC. GRESHAM

10. Suppression by Surrender.

It was probably about the time of the writing of this letter that the King and his Ministers, who had been tending towards a definite course ever since the end of the Northern risings, determined to suppress the whole of the religious houses, monasteries, convents of nuns, and priories. In 1538 they adopted a means and system of their own—most likely devised by Cromwell. There was no Act of Parliament to compel a legal suppression—the Act under which the houses had been dissolved in 1536 only provided legislation in respect of those worth less than £200 a year. Since then various houses had been suppressed—illegally—by the attainder of their abbots or priors. Now followed suppression by consent. Commissioners were appointed by Cromwell to visit the various houses and to endeavour to secure peaceable surrender—if that can be called peaceable which was practically at the sword's point. The inmates of houses surrendered in this fashion were, of course, to be bribed by pensions, varying in amount according to the degree of the pensioned. Every possible inducement was to be put in the way of superiors and brethren to yield possession of the monastic properties to the Crown. If persuasion failed and resistance was made, then the commissioners were to use force.

11. Wholesale Surrenders.

The commissioners for Yorkshire were Sir George Lawson, who had been particularly active in the North ever since the movement for dissolution began, Richard Bellasis, William Blytheman, and James Rokeby. On December 15, 1538, they wrote to Cromwell a letter, signed by all four, stating that they had quietly taken the surrenders and had dissolved the monasteries of Worksop, Monk Bretton, St. Andrew's at York, Byland, Rievaulx, Kirkham, and Ellerton, and the houses of friars at Tickhill, Doncaster, Pontefract, and York, and that in all these cases "we perceyved no murmure or gruge in anye behalfe, bot were thanckefully receyvede." Three days later Lawson and Blytheman advise Cromwell that the Priors of Pontefract (Cluniac), Newburgh (Augustinian), and Malton (Gilbertine) are minded to surrender their houses "as the Holye Gooste knowethe who preserve your lordeshippe," and from that time forward the voluntary surrenders went on steadily. As regards the Cistercian houses, Byland was given up and dissolved on November 30, 1538; Rievaulx on December 3, 1538; Roche had already been surrendered, its career having come to an end in the preceding summer, June 23. Fountains, Meaux, and Kirkstall survived a little longer.

12. Terms of Surrender.

Of the exact proceedings of the commissioners under the system of 1538—inducing "voluntary" surrender—it is not easy to find accurate details. But the late Mr. Richard Holmes gives a very full account of what occurred at Pontefract when the surrender of the Dominican Friary was effected to which allusion has just been made in the commissioners' letter of December 15. In his book, *The Black Friars of Pontefract*, Mr. Holmes prints the deed of surrender, and Blytheman's account of the properties of the house—each is no doubt

typical of similar deeds and inventories, at any rate in the case of the poorer houses. The deed (as rendered in English by Mr. Holmes) runs as follows :

To all the faithful in Christ, to whom this present writing shall come. Robert Day, Prior of the Friars Preachers within the town of Pontefract in the county of York and the Convent of that place, everlasting health in the Lord. Know that the aforesaid Prior and the Convent with unanimous assent and consent and with deliberate intentions, of our sure knowledge and mere motions for certain just causes and reasons specially influencing our minds and consciences voluntarily and of our own accord, have given, granted, and by these presents give and grant, surrender, deliver, and confirm, to the Prince, illustrious in Christ and our Lord, Henry the Eighth, by the Grace of God, King of England and France, Defender of the Faith, Lord of Ireland, and on earth supreme head under Christ of the English Church, all our said Priory and house, and all the site, ground, circuit, and precinct of the same our house to hold to the aforesaid and to our lord the King, his heirs, and assigns for ever. And we the aforesaid Prior and Convent and our successors will by these presents for ever warrant and defend against all men to the aforesaid our Lord the King, his heirs, and assigns our said Conventual House, the site, the mansion and our church aforesaid, and all and every the premises with all rights and appurtenances. In testimony and guarantee of which we the aforesaid Prior and Convent have caused to be affixed to these presents our common seal. Given in our Chapter House the 26th day of the month of November in the 30th year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth.

Robert Day, Prior
Richard Lord, D.D.
Henry Chaloner
George Lesbury
Andrew Nick
William Bramley
Thomas Rawling
William Chandler

13. Meagre Possessions.

According to Blytheman's accounts (Ministers' Accounts, 29–30 Hen. VIII, 197) the value of the possessions

found in the church and friary of the Dominicans of Pontefract was miserably small. He sold "a suit of blue worsted" to the Mayor of Pontefract for 16*s.*; another, of a mulberry colour, to a certain stranger for 13*s.* 4*d.* A suit of vestments known as the Taylor suit fetched 20*s.*; two worn-out vestments produced 5*s.*; a pair of candlesticks and a censer were sold for 1*s.* 4*d.* Pots and pans produced 10*s.*; furniture, 2*s.*; feather beds and bolsters in the guest-chamber, 8*s.* 8*d.* There were no "jewels" save a chalice, of which, the report says, "not 2*d.* could be made at this kind of sale." Altogether, he took in £5 10*s.* 4*d.* Out of that as "gifts of the Lord King" he handed the prior 13*s.* 4*d.*, and the seven friars 5*s.* each—and so turned them out on the world.

14. Legislation in 1539.

It was felt necessary to legalize these surrenders by consent, and during the Parliamentary session of 1539 an Act was passed (31 Hen. VIII, cap. 13) for the formal dissolution of all monasteries, abbeys, nunneries, colleges, hospitals, houses of friars, and other religious and ecclesiastical houses and places within the King's realm of England and Wales, and for the giving of all the properties, lands, possessions, and belongings of the same to the King, his heirs, and successors for ever. This Act was not only retrospective but prospective, for it expressly included within its provisions all religious houses "which hereafter shall be dissolved." But there was further legislation. "The King and those about him," says Gairdner (*English Church in the Sixteenth Century*), "had evidently lost all respect for the sanctity of old endowments; yet he felt the need of a pious pretext to justify his proceedings, and this appeared in another Act of Parliament, passed at the same time, to enable him to apply the confiscated property to better uses. This Act, which passed through all its stages in both houses in a single day, referred in its preamble to

'the slothful and ungodly life' led by those persons who were called religious; and in order that God's Word might be better set forth, children better taught, students maintained at universities, highways mended, and various other good purposes promoted, the King was empowered to create new bishoprics by letters patent and endow them with monastic lands. Within a few years, accordingly, he created bishoprics at Westminster, Bristol, Chester, Gloucester, Peterborough, and Oxford." But the actual amount of money laid out in the founding and endowment of these bishoprics was very small—probably not exceeding £10,000—and the whole proceeding was a mere plausible excuse.

15. Yorkshire Cistercian Nunneries.

Under the legislation of 1539 the remaining Cistercian houses in Yorkshire were dissolved. Marmaduke Bradley, who appears to have been hand in glove with the agents and commissioners of Cromwell from the time when he secured the abbacy by bribing the Vicar-General through Legh and Layton, surrendered Fountains on November 26, and Richard Draper gave up Meaux on December 11. Kirkstall survived a year longer, but was finally surrendered by John Ripley on November 22, 1540. He had twice been abbot. He was first elected in 1508, but resigned in the following year in favour of William Marshall, who ruled the community until 1527. Ripley was elected for the second time in 1528, and would appear in the last years of his abbacy to have adopted means to keep in with each of the contending factions. As for the Cistercian houses of nuns, of which there were ten in Yorkshire—at Basedale, Ellerton, Esholt, Hampole, Keldholme, Kirklees, Nun Appleton, Swine, Sinningthwaite, and Wykeham—they had all disappeared between 1536 and 1539. None were of great value, and all came under the £200 limit of 1536, but several had then received licence to continue. Their history has not come within the scope of this book, but as reference

is here made to them, it may not be amiss to record that these small communities of religious women had done valuable work in the county by educating the daughters of the nobility and gentry, and in teaching the domestic arts to the folk amongst whom their lot was cast. The records of what they did in this way form some of the best and brightest pages of monastic history, and against them, at any rate, no reproach can be brought as regards their possessions, for every house was little removed from the poverty line. Basedale was worth £20 1*s.* 4*d.*; Ellerton, £15 10*s.* 6*d.*; Esholt, £13 5*s.* 4*d.*; Hampole, £63 5*s.* 8*d.*; Keldholme, £29 6*s.* 1*d.*; Kirklees, £19 8*s.* 2*d.*; Nun Appleton, £73 9*s.* 10*d.*; Swine, £35 15*s.* 5*d.*; Sinningthwaite, £60 9*s.* 2*d.* (of this house Raine (*Test. Ebor.*, ii. 272) remarks that ladies who had in their veins some of the best blood in the North of England were always to be found within its walls); and Wykeham, £25 17*s.* 6*d.*

16. Case of the Three Abbots.

That anything in the shape of resistance to the royal demands was now useless was shown by the treatment dealt out to the Abbots of Reading, Glastonbury, and Colchester in the last months of 1539. These men, heads of three of the most important Benedictine abbeys, were suspected of secretly conspiring to resist the suppression of their own and other houses. In September the Crown agents, after surveying the Reading house, arrested the abbot, Hugh Cook, and seized on the abbey. They then travelled forward to Glastonbury, where a surprise visit to Abbot Richard Whiting resulted in the seizure of certain questionable papers of an apparently treasonable nature, and the discovery of money and plate which had been hidden when a previous inventory of the goods had been taken. On this the abbot and certain of his officials were arrested and sent to the Tower. Meanwhile charges were being put together against Abbot Thomas Beche, of Colchester;

to us of this day and mode of thinking they do not seem very serious. He had said that he objected to the pulling down of houses of religion. He had expressed sympathy with Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher. He had spoken about covetousness in a fashion which seemed to make his remarks applicable to the King. But all this was quite sufficient—Abbot Beche was duly executed. Abbot Cook was hanged at Reading in company with two clergymen of the neighbourhood, also suspected of treason. And as for Abbot Whiting, he was hanged on Tor Hill, close by his Abbey of Glastonbury, and having been duly drawn and quartered, his dismembered limbs were sent out and set up for exhibition at Ilchester and Bath and Bridgwater, while his head was placed on a pike above the abbey gate. And after this, as Gairdner remarks, " there was little spirit of resistance left." With Henry on the throne, and creatures like Cromwell and Norfolk at its steps, Englishmen knew little of liberty: a hundred years was to elapse before they became resolute enough to adopt a short and sharp method of dealing with tyrants.

17. Pensions.

By that winter of 1539–40 there was scarcely a monk or a nun left within cloistered walls in England. And now came the question of providing for them. It is usually computed that 8000 monks and nuns were turned out, and that 80,000 other persons were affected. Leaving the 80,000 aside, to the mercies of the State which presently evolved a system of poor relief, little removed from cruel slavery, for their benefit, let us see what happened to the 8000 religious. The Act of 1536 (27 Hen. VIII, cap. 28) expressly stated that provision would be made for the dispossessed—in three specified directions: they should have " capacities " to live honestly and virtuously abroad, or some convenient charity disposed to them towards their living, or they should be transferred " to such honourable great monas-

teries of this realm wherein good religion is observed." There were no honourable great monasteries left by 1540, and most of the 8000 men and women had nothing to look to but the suppressor's charity. As far as one can gather not one-half of the number received any pension at all, nor any provision. No pension was paid to any man or woman unless he or she held the King's patent, and according to the books of the Augmentation Office well under 4000 patents were issued, while the dispossessed numbered over 8000. Certain religious were absolutely debarred from participation in any royal grant. No monk of Jervaulx, for example, was allowed to have one penny—the same treatment was doubtless meted out to those of Salley, for obvious reasons in both cases. The friars, taking them as a whole, were driven out on the world penniless—they had been too active against the King. Royal favour, indeed, had a good deal to do with the pensioning. The Abbot of Ramsey got £266 13*s.* 4*d.* a year for life because he had been quick to surrender his house, and active in persuading other superiors to follow his example. On the other hand, the Franciscans at Doncaster had £3 handed to them when they were ejected, and the Trinitarians at Newcastle were put out into the street, not only without money, but with a stern admonition to pay certain debts which they were owing when the King's agents seized their property.

18. Pensions of Yorkshire Cistercians.

Amongst the Yorkshire Cistercians the largest pension naturally fell to Marmaduke Bradley, last Abbot of Fountains, who had been at least complaisant and probably quite willing in the matter of the surrender. The pension granted to him was worth about £1200 a year in our money, and as he was also holder of more than one substantial preferment in Yorkshire, and notably of that prebend at Ripon which, he told Cromwell, he vastly preferred to his abbacy, he was in a

position to end his days in great comfort and satisfaction, as is usual with such men. Bradley was a disgrace to his Order, for there is no doubt that he not only bribed Cromwell, Legh, and Layton, but assisted the two visitors in fabricating and exaggerating the charges against Abbot Thirsk which led to his execution at Tyburn. John Ripley, Abbot of Kirkstall, seems to have been little less complaisant than his brother of Fountains, and he was not badly dealt with—his pension of £66 13*s.* 4*d.* a year would represent quite £700 to £800 in present-day value. As for the monks of these houses they received varying amounts—from £4 to £8 a year: similar grants were made to the superiors of the other houses and their brethren, and as far as can be ascertained all these pensions were paid regularly during the life of the King, and some—those of Kirkstall, for instance—were certainly being kept up in 1553, when there is record of them as being discharged for that year. There seems little doubt that the abbots and priors of the men's houses, and the superiors of the women's convents, were provided for properly, especially when they had been quick to fall in with the royal wishes, but of the great bulk of the ordinary religious their pensions were miserably small, and contemporary documents show that many fell into great poverty, many nuns who were too aged to work becoming dependent on charity which was not always forthcoming, and ending their days in want and misery.

19. Pensions of Nuns.

The particulars of the pensions paid to the inmates of the Cistercian nunneries in Yorkshire are given in Mr. Clay's *Suppression Papers*, and are worth considering as being typical of what was probably done all over the country. At Basedale, the prioress, Elizabeth Rowghton, got £6 13*s.* 4*d.*; Alice Stable, £1 6*s.* 8*d.*; Elizabeth Couper, Margaret Couper, Agnes Nellis, Agnes Addison, Barbara Brownley, Agnes Turtylby, and

Joan Fletcher, 20*s.* each. At Esholt, the prioress, Joan Jenkynson, got £6; Agnes Collyn, Joan Burton, Barbara Dogeson, Agnes Dogeson, Agnes Bayne, Elizabeth Mandy, Agnes Woodd, and Joan Huson got £1 6*s.* 8*d.* each. At Kirklees, Joan Kyppes was prioress. There is no mention of what she got, but Janet Kyppes and Joan Lenthorpe got £2 each, and five other nuns £1 13*s.* 4*d.* each. At Nun Appleton there were nineteen nuns in residence—the prioress, Eleanor Nornabell, got £2 6*s.* 8*d.*; the pensions of the others varied from 33*s.* 4*d.* to 40*s.*, but one, Agnes Snaynton, got £3. At Sinningthwaite, "the most aristocratic of the Yorkshire nunneries," the prioress, Katherine Foster, got 10 marks. There is no mention of other pensions. At Wykeham, Katharine Nandyke, the prioress, got £6 13*s.* 4*d.*; the nuns, of whom there were several, were awarded sums varying between 26*s.* 8*d.* and 53*s.* 4*d.* It will be observed that the lowest of these pensions amounted to about £15 a year in modern value. But it is doubtful if some of these Yorkshire nuns continued to receive them; some, at any rate, are known to have ended their days as dependents in one or other of the great houses. It has often been said that a large number of the younger nuns married on being cast upon the world, but investigation has shown that there are only two such instances known, and those were of novices who had not been professed.

20. Suppression Scenes.

It requires little imagination to picture to oneself the strange doings which would attend the actual suppression of a religious house, whether it was of the magnificence of Fountains or the humility of Ellerton-on-Swale. With the exception of Kirkstall, the Cistercian houses stood in rural districts, and even at Kirkstall, Leeds was then some miles away from the abbey boundaries. Nothing but a rustic population was near any one of the houses—Rievaulx, Salley, and

Jervaulx in the sixteenth century were still in the midst of solitudes, and though Fountains was very near to Ripon, Ripon was an insignificant town. The country-folk, we may be sure, gathered about, open-mouthed and wide-eyed, while the surprising and extraordinary proceedings went on. There was plenty for them to watch. For what we of this time are very apt to forget is that these proceedings were carried out suddenly, in all cases, and in the full light of day, in glaring publicity. On Sunday the country-folk saw the ancient church and cloister in full glory—by Saturday they were degraded and ruinous. The onlookers, who would come hurrying to the scene from farm and field, moor and meadow, throwing aside whatever tasks they were engaged in at the time, to stare at this sudden excitement, would actually see eviction and spoliation practised, with no consideration for the evicted. They would see the treasures of the church torn from shrines and altars; the furniture of the cloister thrown out in the grounds; lead stripped from the roof; enough damage done to the stone-work to make the house uninhabitable. We know from contemporary evidence that the agents' serving-men used to trick themselves out with the vestments which their masters had thrown aside as being of no value, and rode from village to village in them; we know, too, in what light estimation men like Norfolk held objects which others regarded with respect. "I do send to Your Majesty," writes the Duke, addressing a letter to the King on June 5, 1537, "all such things of gold as were on the Shrine at Bridlington which I caused Master Magnus to take of the said Shrine at my being there to suppress the house; the said gold work is in two boxes sealed with my seal . . . and I dare well say these doth not lacke the value of one ring. In the less box is three proper wrought tablets. And if I durst be a thief, I would have stolen them to have sent them to the Queen's [Anne Boleyn's] grace, but now your Highness having them may give them unto

her without offence if it be your pleasure." So—as a writer of that period might well have observed—what had decorated the shrine of St. John at Bridlington Priory went to bedizen a piece of light flesh and blood.

21. Popular Opinion.

What impression was made upon the country people who witnessed these doings? We have a good deal of dependable testimony. The patriarchal Henry Jenkins, who claimed to have known Fountains Abbey in its last days, and had often carried messages to the abbot, used to speak in the evening of his long life, of the great to-do which there was amongst the rustic populations when the religious houses were suppressed. But there are certain contemporary documents. In Ellis's *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, the editor, Sir H. Ellis, gives extracts from an old manuscript account of the suppression of Roche, which, he remarks, probably exhibits "what was at that time the genuine as well as the general feeling of the English public." This document is believed by Aveling, the historian of Roche, to have been written by one Cuthbert Shirebrook, a clergyman who lived near the abbey, and whose uncle was present at the suppression. It tells some strange tales, and throws curious sidelights on actual occurrences. "As soon as the visitors were entered within the gates they called the abbot and other officers of the house," runs one passage, "and caused them to deliver all the keys, and took an inventory of all their goods, both within doors and without. Such beasts, horses, sheep, and cattle as were abroad in pasture or grange places, the visitors caused to be brought into their presence. And when they had done so, they turned the abbot and all his convent and household forth of the doors. This thing was not a little grief to the convent and all the servants of the house, departing one from another, and especially such as with their conscience could not break their profession. It would have made a heart of

flint melt and weep to have seen the breaking up of the house, the sorrowful departing and the sudden spoil that fell the same day of their departure from their home." Then, a little later in his narrative, he adds a naïve account of a conversation with his father, who had joined with others of the countryside in purchasing certain of the monastic goods from the commissioners. "I demanded, thirty years after the suppression [which he had actually witnessed as a boy], of my father, who had bought part of the timber of the church, and all the timber of the steeple with the bell frame . . . whether he thought well of the religious persons, and of the religion then used. And he told me 'Yea, for,' said he, 'I saw no cause to the contrary.' 'Well,' said I, 'then how came it to pass you were so ready to destroy and spoil what you thought so well of?' 'Might I not as well as others have some profit from the spoil of the abbey?' said he. 'I saw all would away, and therefore I did as others did.'" In this account, too, there is tribute to the easygoing customs of the Cistercians as landlords, which, of course, accounted largely for their popularity amongst the rustic populations. "They never raised any rent, or took any incomes or garsomes of their tenants: nor ever took in or improved any commons: although the most part and the greatest was ground belonging to their professions. . . All sorts of people were helped and succoured by abbeys—yea, happy was that person that was tenant to an abbey, for it was a rare thing to hear that any tenant was removed by any taking his farm over his head. He was not afraid of any re-entry for non-payment of his rent, if necessity drove him thereunto. And thus they fulfilled all the works of charity in all the country round about them to the good example of all lay persons that now have taken forth other lessons, that is *nunc tempus alios postulat mores*."

22. Letter to Cardinal Pole.

As to what was thought and felt in the market towns there is some example in a letter which the late Richard Holmes, the well-known antiquary of Pontefract, copied in the original spelling from the holograph at the Record Office some thirty years ago. It was written probably in 1556 by one John Hamerton, who lived at Purston, just outside Pontefract, to Reginald Pole, then Archbishop of Canterbury.

To the Right Honourable and Most Reverend Father in God, the Lord Cardinal Pole, to his Good Grace.

May it please your honourable Grace, of your great mercy, pity, and abundant charity, ever according to your accustomed clemency to reduce into your devout memory my old, long, and continual suit to your noble grace, touching the re-edifying of the church belonging to the College and Hospital founded in the honour of the Most Blessed Trinity in Pontefract within the county of York. My lord, what can I say therein that hath not been revealed in former petitions to your grace touching the same suit, not as my only private suit, but by the suit of the Mayor and all the whole inhabitants of the same town, not only exhibited to your grace but also unto the King and the highest under their common seal over and beside the supplication of the poor bede people of the same Hospital? My lord, as I have said before, we had in that town one abbey [the writer meant the Cluniac Priory of St. John], two colleges, a House of Friars Preachers, one anchoress, one hermit, four chantry priests, one gild priest. Of all these the inhabitants of the town of Pontefract are neither relieved bodily nor spiritually. We have there left an unlearned vicar [this was John Barker, Vicar of Pontefract from 1538 to 1568], which hireth two priests, for indeed he is not able to discharge the cure other ways, and I dare say the vicar's levying is under forty marks, the parsonage hath the pensioners, and surely two parts of the property hath the parishioners, but this is a general infirmity, and Lord amend it! Truly, there be some head parishioners and petty parishioners and every one catcheth a price. But the poor needy members of Christ catcheth none at all. But my suit to your noble grace

at this present is, most humbly to desire your grace that you will have compassion of the great misery that this said town of Pontefract is fallen into, both bodily and spiritually, since the godly foundations aforesaid hath been so mis-ordered and mis-used, and the old sanctuaries of God so pitifully defiled and spoiled. These premises tenderly considered, if it would please your noble grace so to prefer the continual suit aforesaid, to the advancement of God's glory and to the comfort of His poor members both bodily and spiritually, so that I your poor suppliant and many others shall have come continually to pray according to our abundant duty for the prosperous estate of our sovereign Lord and Lady the King and the Queens highness with your honourable grace long to endure by your supplicant and continual orator, unworthy JOHN HAMERTON

This letter, of course, was written during the reign of Philip and Mary, at a time when men of its writer's stamp were hoping that the old order of things would be restored. How vain—and how impossible—that hope was, we know. From the day on which the last house was surrendered to the King's commissioners there was never any hope that monasticism would be revived in England on the old lines. For on those lines it had been a failure, and especially so in the case of the Cistercian Order.

23. THE CISTERCIAN FAILURE.

Let us consider why the Cistercians had failed. But, after all, the matter needs little consideration. The reason of their failure is too obvious to any unprejudiced student of history. They failed because they were not true to their first principles, because they departed from their original ideal, because they broke their own laws and neglected their own Rule. Whoever carefully reads the first constitutions and regulations of the Order knows that not in the mind of Stephen Harding, no, nor in that of Bernard of Clairvaux, was there any idea of the acquisition of wealth, of the gathering together of lands and houses, of the accumulation of gold and silver,

even for the use of the sanctuary. Simplicity, poverty, labour—these were the things on which the Rule rested. It is inconceivable that the pioneers ever looked forward to days wherein the Order would wax fat with treasure, when abbots would look out across broad domains and own rich manors, when monks would neglect the labour of the field for the leisure of the cloister. It is inconceivable that Prior Richard, departing in absolute poverty from the ease and slothfulness of St. Mary's at York, ever dreamt that a day would come wherein his successors at Fountains would rank with nobles in point of wealth and power, and sit in high places, and amass store of jewels and plate, and forget the severe rules which the first brethren had kept. Between the Cistercian of the twelfth century and the Cistercian of the fifteenth there is a difference which no argument, however plausible, can explain. The Cistercians of the end must be judged by the standard of the Hardings and the Bernards of the beginning.

24. Divergence from the Rule.

Supposing the Cistercians had kept to their Rule, in letter and in spirit?—supposing, during the four centuries of their existence in Yorkshire, they had preserved their original high-mindedness, their austerity, their devotion to prayer and labour?—is it conceivable that they would have failed? The world, evil as it is, is yet terribly afraid of meddling with sanctity made evident before its eyes. The world has a "common sense"—that common sense does not interfere with things which are proved to be of good. If the Cistercians had kept to their constitutions, if men had viewed them as a community devoted to austerity, prayer, labour, content with the bare subsistence which they were to gain by the toil of their own hands, covetous of nothing, eager for nothing but the carrying out of their founders' high purpose, the world would have admired—and left them alone. But what did the world actually see? It saw

all the simplicity and austerity disappear. It saw magnificent churches and lordly cloisters arise. It saw acre added to acre, and house to house. It saw abbots change into keen men of business, more occupied with books of account than with breviary and missal. It saw the monastic community transformed into a land-owning corporation, popular enough, no doubt, with the tenants to whom it let its farms on easy terms, but none the less become something which was not in accord with the original idea—which was, that what land monks possessed, monks themselves should till. More than all, the world, always narrowly observant, saw the monastic Orders become envious, covetous, grasping, abbot going to law with abbot over a messuage or a tenement, full of a litigious spirit. It saw that which had arisen in a holy poverty become a system whereof money was the foundation. Explain it however so plausibly, the monastic system as practised in England during those middle centuries became a failure because its upholders trafficked with Mammon. Beginning with nothing, the Orders came to possession of much. And the "common sense"—which is, after all, the recognition of fittingness—began to ask questions. One such question received a cruel—an unnecessarily cruel—answer in the sixteenth century. Was it ever intended—so that question really framed itself—that these monastic communities should become what they have become, what they are known to be? Was it ever intended that a close corporation of some twenty or thirty men—as at Fountains—should own land and property worth at least £12,000 a year of modern money? And doubtless many who propounded that question answered it at once, pertinently—Let them be judged by their own rule. The truth was that the Cistercians, long before the end came, had fallen into the condition which had so roused the pious indignation of Prior Richard at York. "We lust after all things," said he, pointing to the state of affairs at St. Mary's in his day; "we lose

our tempers, we quarrel, we seize the goods of others, we claim our rights by lawsuits, we protect fraud and lying, we follow the flesh and its desires. We live for ourselves, we please ourselves, we fear to be conquered, we glory in conquering, we oppress others, we shrink from being oppressed, we envy others, we glory in our own success, we make merry and grow fat on the sweat of others, the whole world cannot hold our malice." Who, that has carefully read the chartularies, coucher books, and documents of the various Cistercian houses in Yorkshire, or has followed the accounts of their interminable law proceedings in the legal records, can truthfully deny that what Prior Richard said of his fellow Benedictines of York does not apply to the Yorkshire Cistercians for at least three centuries of their existence? The chartularies are not records of sanctity and good deeds, but of insatiable hunger for land and houses and money, and of a litigious habit of mind which cannot be explained away.

25. If the Rule had been kept?

Different, indeed, might it all have been had the Cistercians kept to their primitive excellence! Not all the Henrys, Norfolks, Cromwells in the world would have dared to lay a finger on a Stephen Harding or a Bernard of Clairvaux. Would they, indeed, have ever laid hands on the monastic bodies of the sixteenth century if those bodies had not been worth robbing and spoiling? What profit is there in robbing the man who has nothing? If the religious houses had been what their founders meant them to be—houses of holy poverty, of prayer, of learning, of help—there would have been no such spectacle as that which disgraced the reign of Henry VIII. Tyranny would have been there, and covetousness, and the rapacity of man—but these things would not have found the wherewithal to batten upon. As it was, there was a vast accumulation of wealth—more wealth, perhaps, than statisticians can accurately

calculate. And what business has the monk with money? Can any man for one sober moment picture St. Basil as Abbot of Fountains in the days of its glory and grandeur, or Bernard of Clairvaux in the Assize Courts at York, tussling with the men of wig and gown for possession of some miserable messuage or scrap of land? During the last hundred years we have seen monasticism revived in England, on stricter and purer lines, conformable to the original ideas. Monks and nuns are amongst us again—thousands of them. But who desires to interfere with the Cistercians of Charnwood, or the Benedictines of Downside, or with the numerous communities of men and women, whether in the Roman or the Anglican Church, who feel that they can best serve God in the cloister? No one, save the bigots to whom no sensible man pays one moment's attention. And why? Because the "common sense" of the nation sees that in these modern religious houses religion is real, is the true motive, that the various rules are kept in them, and that they do not traffic in land and property, striving to amass riches. Now during the Middle Age in England the monastic Orders did traffic in worldly matters—and as they put their trust in the things of this world, so by the things of this world they were brought low. There must have been many a good and pious monk at the time of the Suppression, who, as he sadly turned away from the cloister which was to shelter him no more, was truthful and courageous enough to face facts, and sadly said to himself, "Had we but kept our Rule; had we but loved poverty as a bride; had we but preserved our feet from treading on many lands, and our hands from grasping at much gold, then the Lord's Light had not been quenched in our sanctuary, and His praises had gone up from our walls for ever!"

26. The End.

But it was all over, and the ivy grew on the broken masonry of church and cloister, and profane hands

carried away consecrated stone and mended the roads or repaired the stables with it, and before very long men came to wander around Fountains and Rievaulx and Byland and Roche, wondering—so soon are things forgotten—what they had really been in their day, and what manner of men they were who had lived in them. In all the history of the fall of human institutions, nothing is so sudden, so startling, so terribly dramatic as the fall of the religious houses of England in 1539. A year before the end the bells still rang out across valley and moor: a year after the end there was no sound of ringing, for there was not a bell left, and the towers were already crumbling. All had come to an end. And as the monks fell, so the immediate instrument of their destruction fell too—surely, swiftly. On March 23, 1540, the last of the religious houses was surrendered, when the Abbot of Waltham handed over his keys to the royal commissioners; on June 10 the Duke of Norfolk tore the Order of St. George violently from Cromwell's neck as he stood at the council board, and hurried him off to the Tower on a charge of high treason. And Cromwell knew that all was over for him, and it may have been with a sudden quickening of spirit that he accepted his fate, and bade his enemy to make sharp work, and not to leave him languishing in prison. Not long was he left to languish, for it was the fashion to do things expeditiously in those days. Yet long enough, one thinks, to allow him to reflect upon certain matters. Did he think of them? Did he look back over the days of his life and consider his works and his principles and his time-serving and his love of opportunism and his greed and his cold-heartedness and his implacable doings when cruelty was needed for the achievement of his purpose? As he sat in the Tower, waiting for death, did he think of More, whom he had made to wait there for his death; as he walked across Tower Hill to the block, did he think of Fisher, whom he had sent on that same journey, a white-haired

and feeble man, not very long before? And when at last he stood on the scaffold, in that last moment of life, with the awful unknown so very close to him, and took his last look round on the ancient city and the still more ancient river, did he see, coming between him and the gabled houses and flowing tide, blotting out the fairness of the July morning, the faces, row upon row, of those pale ghosts whom his ruthlessness had sent hurrying out of life as he himself was now to be hurried?—and if he reflected on these things and saw these things, what were his last thoughts and conclusions? Who shall say? Who shall dare to say? *Si obliti sumus nomen Dei nostri, et si expandimus manus nostras ad deum alienum: nonne Deus requiret ista? ipse enim novit abscondita cordis.*

THE END

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